Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

June 1972 17 pence

SUDAN
JULY 1971 & AFTER

Central Committee, Communist Party of Sudan

Editorial Comments

Peter Wyncoll
The General Strike in Nottingham

Grahame Lock
Louis Althusser: Philosophy and Leninism

Uwe Zemke
Georg Weerth—Friend of Marx and Engels

Discussion:
Frank Jackson
Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Volume 16, Number 6

Editor James Klugmann

Editorial Board Professor J. D. Bernal Gabriel Carritt/Jack Cohen/Maurice Cornforth/Maurice Dobb John Foster/John Gollan/Arnold Kettle/John Mahon/Alan Morton/Bert Pearce/ Michael Seifert/ George Wake/Nick Wright

Editorial Correspondence James Klugmann, 16 King Street, WC2E 8HY

Advertisements Doris Allison, above address

Orders and Subscriptions Usual agents or Central Books Ltd., 37 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8PS

Subscription rates £2.50 per annum

CONTENTS

	Editorial Comments	161
Central Committee Communist Party of Sudan	Sudan—July 1971 and After	166
Peter Wyncoll	The General Strike in Nottingham	172
Grahame Lock	Louis Althusser: Philosophy and Leninism	180
Uwe Zemke	Georg Weerth—Friend of Marx and Engels	187
Discussion Contribution		
Frank Jackson	Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain	192

A FEW OF THE ARTICLES DUE IN JULY AND FORTHCOMING MONTHS

Louis Althusser	Marx's Philosophy
Roger Bartra	The Asiatic Mode of Production
Joan Bellamy	Fifty Years of Outer Mongolia
Isabel Brown	The Free Dimitrov Campaign in Britain
Santiago Carrillo	The Spanish Communist Party in the Struggle for Freedom
Angela Davis	The Nature of Freedom
Georgi Dimitrov	Letter to the 7th World Congress Preparatory Commission
Cecil Gutzmore	Science and 'Pseudo Science'
Peter Kerrigan	Recollections of Dimitrov at the 7th World Congress
James Klugmann	Dimitrov and the 7th World Congress
David Pavett	A Marxist Discourse on Method
D. N. Pritt	The Dimitrov Counter Trial in London
Martin Smith	Trends in British Psychiatry
Peter Zinkin	Recollections of the Free Dimitrov Campaign

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editorial Comments

THE spirit of the Star Chamber, of the Combination Acts (1799-1824), is abroad again in the proceedings of the Industrial Relations Court although its actions have been glossed over by a great Press chorus boosting its "informality".

The absence of wigs is supposed to recompense the Unions for the most savage attacks on their right to strike and to defend the actions of their shop stewards.

The law, with its "impartial" judges, drawn every one of them, from circles most closely identified with the ruling class, has ever been one of the most favoured weapons of the capitalists in their struggles with the workers.

From the earliest beginnings of the modern trade union movement at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the present day, the trade unions have had to face one legal attack after another. The Combination Acts had hardly been repealed when the Tolpuddle Martyrs were transported. Throughout the whole of the nineteenth century the trade unions were involved in one legal battle after another culminating in the Taff Vale Judgement at the turn of the twentieth century (1901) which seems to have inspired Sir John Donaldson (it made the Unions responsible for any losses the employers might suffer as a result of strikes) to try and go one better.

There followed legal restraints during World War One and after it, following the General Strike of 1926, the infamous Trade Union Act of 1927, then Order 1305 during and after World War Two and now Heath's Industrial Relations Act with its fines and threats of sequestration of all Union funds, its orders to Unions to "discipline" and remove militant shop stewards etc.

This the most formidable attack of the Trade Unions during this century, has witnessed what has been alas, all too frequent a spectacle. The Right Wing TUC leaders retreated in face of Sir John Donaldson's first salvoes. The united stand of the whole Trade Union movement against the Act and against any co-operation with the Court, expressed at the recent TUC Congress, has been breached and the fight against the Act consequently weakened.

This is one side. In contrast, the will to struggle and defeat the Act was never greater amongst some trade Unions and especially amongst rank and file workers—dockers, building, engineering, transport and other workers. This was demonstrated by the splendid May Day demonstrations and strikes in a number of important industrial areas.

This kind of action, linked with pressure inside the Unions to get the TUC and certain Union leaderships to reverse the disastrous policy of retreat will yet defeat Sir John, his Court and Ted Heath's Tory Government which inspired it all.

The Conference called by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions for June 10, will marshal the fighting forces of the working class to do precisely this.

SUDAN PRISONERS

A moving appeal from the Communist Party of the Sudan has recently been received in Britain. It points out that even official figures in the Sudan admit that there are some 1,000 political prisoners and detainees apart from imprisoned members of the armed forces. Some prisoners have been released but new arrests are continuously taking place. In the past three months, for example, about 100 new arrests have been made.

The appeal lists the names of scores of the prisoners. What is most striking is the wide range of industries and professions covered, and the high positions in trade unions, other associations and professional bodies held by the prisoners.

As readers will recall, the first civilian to be executed by the tyrant Nimeiry was Shafie Ahmed el Sheikh, the general secretary of the Trade Union Federation. It should cause no surprise, therefore, to learn that among those now in jail are Awadallah Ibrahim, the Federation President, and El Hag Abdel Rahman, the Assistant Secretary. Fifteen other members of the Federation's executive committee are in prison, including the chairman of the oil workers' union, the printing workers' union, civil aviation workers' union, steel and iron workers' union, and central government water and electrical workers.

Leaders of the Executive Committee of the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Federation of Professional and Office Workers' Union are also in jail, including the Federation president, the secretary, deputy secretary, treasurer and four other committee members.

Many secretaries and chairmen of the various teachers' unions are under arrest, and so are whole regional committees of a number of trade unions, as well as rank and file members.

Detainees include members of unions of doctors, lawyers, government departments, pharmacists and farmers. Many academic figures, artists, journalists and others are detained.

As for the conditions of the prisoners and detainees, the appeal states:

> "The conditions in jails and detention centres are extremely bad. There is no medical care, no radio, no newspapers, no books. The families have the right to only one visit per month, and even this one visit can be stopped without reason. For example, on January 26th, 1972, the day of Id al Adha (the foremost Islamic religious festival) a ban on visits led to clashes between the families and the guards".

It also records the fate of 44 detainees taken away earlier this year from the detention camp to an unknown destination.

> "They were in fact taken to Al Fasher, the capital of Darfur province. 23 remained there, the rest were taken to Zalkha prison, south of Fasher. Conditions in these two prisons are among the worst, with very insufficient food and water, no sanitation, no facilities for washing, very little medical attention with only one doctor of pronounced anti-communist views who refused to attend sick prisoners or admit them to hospital".

The appeal ends:

> "But resistance to the terrorist regime in the Sudan is increasing, and not only among the families of the prisoners and detainees. In Khartum, there is a campaign for their release as well as demands for better treatment while they are kept in prison and detention centres.
>
> "We call on Arab and world opinion to express its solidarity with our people and our revolutionary movement by demanding the release of the prisoners and detainees".

Anyone desiring the full list of prisoners available, in order to organise a protest via his/her appropriate trade union or professional body can apply to the International Department of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 16 King Street, W.C.2.

OIL AND THE MIDDLE EAST

All those interested in the politics of the Middle East will find valuable material in *Oil Imperialism in the Oil Gulf*.[1] This publication, issued by Liberation (formerly MCF) has been written by Bob Edwards, M.P., a leading official of the chemical workers' section of the Transport and General Workers' Union.

It contains additional material in the form of full page charts and texts prepared by Gertrude Elias, each chart dealing with one of the giant oil monopolies which has substantial stakes in Middle East oil. The companies dealt with in these charts, and whose international ramifications and those of its directors are here revealed, include Gulf Oil, Getty Oil, Standard Oil, Esso, Mobil Oil, Royal Dutch Shell, British Petroleum (BP).

In his examination of "Oil Imperialism in the Oil Gulf", Bob Edwards gives a quick bird's eye picture of the Trucial Oman States, Bahrein, Oman and Muscat, Kuwait and Qatar, and of the oil projects there. He goes on to point out:

> "The total capital investments involved in these oil-projects are indeed breath-taking. They amount to thousands of millions of pounds and whilst this oil wealth has enriched a few and made many multi-millionaires, and whilst this oil wealth of the Gulf has formed the basis of great new science-based industries, such as petrochemicals, supplying the essential raw materials from the developing chemical industries, very little of this wealth has seeped back to the people of these lands who still—with few exceptions—live in grinding poverty, plagued by sickness and a short life expectation, with few primary schools and, indeed, very few universities. Kuwait would be the single exception to this general rule.
>
> "Thus it will be seen by this brief glance at the resources of the Gulf that international politics play, and are bound to play, an increasingly important role as far as its future is concerned. Peoples of these lands are crying aloud for independence, security and freedom, and no force in the world—as all history ancient and modern, has proved—can hold back this rising tide of protest based on the need for emancipation and human freedom. The will of these peoples is bound to prevail and it is our duty, it is our privilege and it should be our business to become part of this great social revolution and help it along its way. By so doing we will become a new influence in the world for good, based not on military might but on our own ethical and moral standards".

Then follows a section providing invaluable statistics on world and Middle East oil production, reserves and earnings, with break-down information on each of the above mentioned states.

[1] Copies can be obtained from Liberation, 313/15, Caledonian Road, London, N.1.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bob Edwards also draws attention to the world-wide ramifications of these giant oil monopolies:

> "The oil cartel has very considerably extended its power over the economy of many nations and has moved into the production of vital chemicals and pharmaceutical products in a very big way, literally dominating the new science-based industry of petro-chemicals.
>
> "These huge monopolies with their international cartel arrangements are more powerful than governments, they are indeed states within states, and their directors represent the wealth-owning ruling class of all important industrial countries of the western world. Over the years they deliberately restricted the flow of oil in many countries in order to increase their super-profits by means of organised world shortage, and by international cartel agreement they have fixed the price of petrol, oil and aviation spirits at an exorbitantly high level, based on the high production cost of American Texas oil".

The material contained in this publication helps to explain why the imperialist powers are so touchy about their positions in the Middle East, why they are sensitive about any move by Malta to wind up Britain's military and naval base, why they plot against President Makarios and the Cypriot people and why they use Israel against the Arab States.

CULTURE & DEMOCRACY IN HUNGARY

L'Humanité recently published a full page interview with Gyorgy Aczel, member of the Political Bureau of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, who is particularly concerned with problems of culture in Hungary. He was in Paris on the occasion of the launching of the French edition of a book he has written.[2]

Amongst the questions he was asked were:

Is there censorship in Hungary?

What is the position regarding freedom of discussion and of research?

He replied:—

"To put it in a nutshell: there is no censorship office in Hungary, but, whether it pleases some people or not, there are limitations and prohibitions aimed at preserving the rights of our people.

> (As long ago as April 1968, Gyorgy Aczel dealt with this question in detail in a speech delivered to the Political Academy of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, which is reproduced in his book. In this address he said: "No work of real importance will be subject to suppression or kept away from the Hungarian people even if the importation of certain works involves us in heavy financial sacrifices. . . . We guarantee freedom for all creative national works which demonstrate talent and express honest intentions even if ideologically they do not reflect Socialism. Works of especial merit can be published or exhibited provided they do not attack the social order based on our laws".)

Freedom of discussion is indispensable. We make no claims to Papal infallibility and we have plenty of problems which need solving. During the period of the personality cult our task was "easy"—I say this quite frankly—for one could provide answers without having to think too much. That was a painful experience. We have now woken up to what we were doing for it was not possible to follow this road much longer. If we want to answer questions which arise, provide solutions to problems which constantly recur, we must give free rein to reflection and to discussion. Otherwise we will simply get formal answers.

In order to verify scientific and technological theories, it is industry which, in all kinds of ways, plays the role of laboratory for the testing of experience, whereas for the humanities and social sciences discussion is more necessary than ever.

In Hungary our intellectuals participate in discussions from within—not from outside—with the fullest conscientiousness and sense of responsibility. We do not simply ask them to provide answers, but to take part in formulating the questions.

If one examines the situation of intellectuals in Socialist society one must not

[2] "Culture et democratie socialiste", Editions Sociales, Paris.

Please post MARXISM TODAY to me every month.

I enclose:

£2.50 for one year

Name .....

Address .....

.....

Post with remittance to:

CENTRAL BOOKS LTD.
37 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8PS

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proceed in the same way as one would if one were examining intellectuals in capitalist society. There are, however, people who behave in this way, who repeat dogmas without taking realities into account. (Dogmatists do not only exist in the workers' movement. The Right also has its dogmatists.)

I am not saying that things are idyllic in Hungary. The idyllic belongs to novels and not to the best ones either. But there is freedom of discussion, freedom of research.

It follows from this that the Party and the Government reserve the right to decide what means they will make available to researchers to publish their results—e.g. in the specialist magazines, on television etc.

We know that all scientists cherish the dream of testing all their theories, of experiencing them, in practice. In medicine, where one can experiment with white mice, there are no problems. But in the social sciences? Men are not guinea-pigs.

It is a very heavy responsibility to have to decide whether to take this or that experience as a starting point. And here again the Party has to play its leading role, be the advance guard in encouraging such new approaches. In order to be able to do this it has—as Lenin emphasises—to guard itself against habit, against conservatism—the two greatest enemies of progress."

THE STRUGGLE IN CHILE

In the third week of April the Chilean Government of Popular Unity expropriated the assets of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT). This was because documents proving the complicity of this huge US super-monopoly in efforts to overthrow the Allende Government had been "leaked" to an American journalist who made them public.

On the other side, one of the groups of the Popular Unity Alliance—the Left Radicals—has broken away. Right Wing opposition to the Government's nationalisation and other policies is hardening, while on the "Left" the activities of the ultra leftist MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) in initiating land seizures by peasants, in organising independent armed groups, is causing serious difficulties for the Government.

These developments continue to focus attention on the great drama of Chile's struggle to advance along the road to socialism.

A most informative survey of developments, problems, struggles and perspectives in Chile, is given in a report of a meeting of the political parties composing Popular Unity, held to mark the first one and a half years in office of the Popular Unity Government headed by President Allende, which is printed in a recent issue of *Comment*.[3]

Space permits only the barest mention of some of the achievements—and lines of further development—mentioned in the report. Some of these are:—

> "The power of the great monopolies has been weakened but the reactionaries still have an important basis of support. . . . We already have under the control of society, fundamental sectors which were in the hands of imperialist interests . . . copper, iron, nitrate, coal, the iron and steel industry, nearly all the banking system, large cement making enterprises . . . textiles, fishery; 1,378 latifundia (large landed estates) have been expropriated. . . ."

Unemployment has been reduced from 8.3 per cent to 3.8 per cent. . . . 60 per cent of the national income now goes to the workers as compared with 51 per cent previously. Price inflation is substantially less than in 1970.

100,000 houses were begun in 1971—this is absolutely unprecedented in Chile. There has been a massive expansion of education—university education is up by 25 per cent: primary education extended to 98 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 years: every child under 15 now gets half a litre of milk every day. . . .

For the period ahead, new ambitious objectives were set, especially in the economic sphere. A central economic controlling body is to be established to unify the whole of economic policy. The banking and financial system is to be reorganised to serve the interests of the new economy. A vast programme of investment will be the main feature of the plan for 1972. The contribution to be made by the socialist countries to this investment programme is noted as being of "especial importance".

Special measures are outlined to guarantee help and a future to both small and medium companies and small and medium farmers. For the former, credits, raw materials and equipment are promised; the latter are given assurances against expropriations, land is assigned to them and credit and technical assistance made available.

Special emphasis is placed in the report on the need to achieve full equality for women, for the protection of the family and defence of

[3] See "Comment" April 22, 1972 Vol. 10, No. 9.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the unmarried mother as well as extending still further facilities for children.

> "Nursery schools must be increased. . . . The half litre of milk is the first step . . . we are determined to assure for each child . . . an increased number of products and services".

The spirit of genuine socialist democracy suffuses the whole report. It speaks of the voluntary work which is being done, especially by young people, and says "This is evidence that the workers and the people feel themselves to be the rulers of their country. . . ." and emphasises again and again the need for the participation of the people in carrying out the policy.

> "Consult the people and make all decisions through them . . . as in all other aspects of the revolutionary process, the improvement of the State and Government institutions will depend upon the work and participation of the masses".

NEW THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Lawrence and Wishart are publishing this month a very important new book by Jack Woddis on *New Theories of Revolution*.* This contains a full-scale critical commentary, long needed, on the views about Revolution of those modern heroes of the "new Left", Herbert Marcuse, Franz Fanon and Regis Debray.

Jack Woddis never underestimates the valuable insights on many aspects of contemporary society contained in these new theories. But basically, he shows that what they have in common, and what demands resistance to their influence on the left, is a disparagement of the revolutionary role of the organised working class and the elevation of that of peasants, "lumpen" proletarians, and students. One and all, these theories make out that the organised working class has become "corrupt", "integrated" into capitalist society, and therefore impotent as a revolutionary force. This amounts at once to a profound pessimism and the advocacy of adventurist courses to try to make a revolution without the working class. But that is not the way to win a revolution—and this perhaps accounts partly for the fact that these theories are often so much boosted and publicised by "establishment" journals and newspapers nowadays, while at the same time they violently denounce the views of the Communist Party when they are unable merely to ignore them.

Of the three influential "ideologists of revolution" whose views Jack Woddis discusses, Fanon was concerned chiefly with "the wretched of the earth" in Africa, and Debray with Latin America, while Marcuse has specialised on rather discouragingly assessing the prospects of the Western world.

Jack Woddis's polemic is one that faces *theories* with *facts*, and makes facts speak for themselves. It surveys in detail recent developments in Africa, and contains a detailed examination of such key events of recent history as the Cuban revolution, the armed struggles in other Latin American countries, and the upheavals in France in May-June 1968. It deals with such questions of controversy today as the relation of armed struggle with other forms of political action, the role of students, the significance of the prison revolts in the United States, the role of anarchism in the modern world, and the impact of the scientific and technological revolution on the composition and outlook of the working class.

This is a big book of over 400 pages, of wide scope and profound relevance to major problems of our time. Its size has made it impracticable for the publishers to produce it in the cheap paperback form which one could have wished. Its price is consequently quite high, though it offers good value for money. Readers who cannot afford or save up £4.50 for an important book are advised to ask for it at their local libraries.

* *New Theories of Revolution*, by Jack Woddis. Lawrence and Wishart £4.50.

PARIS AND POLITICS

Summer Holiday School

VIROFLAY (8 miles from centre Paris)

August 5th-12th

or

August 12th-19th

"ON THE ROAD TO SOCIALIST POWER"

£15 (*excluding travel*)

Organised by Central Education Department, C.P., 16 King Street, London, WC2E 8HY.

s.a.e. for details.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Sudan—July 1971 and After

Central Committee Communist Party of Sudan

(Public opinion throughout the world was shocked at the brutal killing of the Communist and other democratic leaders in the Sudan last year after the events of July when, following the armed overthrow of General Nimeiry, a reactionary counter-coup took place which restored Nimeiry and pushed the Sudan heavily to the right. The character of those events, the circumstances surrounding them, the role of the Communist Party of the Sudan and the nature and policy of the present government have all been the subject of wide discussion throughout the international movement.

We publish below extensive extracts from an official statement of the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Sudan which has recently been received in Britain and translated from Arabic. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Sudan was soon reformed after the crisis of July 1971, and a new general secretary elected following the murder of its former secretary, Abdel Khaleg Maghoub. The statement from which we publish extracts below was issued in November 1971. It is the first full statement by the Sudanese Communist Party since the events of July 1971, and will undoubtedly be of great interest to our readers. Ed.)

Landmarks on our Road Since the Bloodbath of July 22, 1971

Despite the success of the counter-revolution and its sanguinary actions, despite the blood bath and the black terror, despite the loss of our matchless leaders, despite the continuing witch hunt for the imprisonment of communists, progressives and democrats in every part of the Sudan, we who are still alive have the task to ensure the survival of the Communist Party of the Sudan, to protect it, to preserve the flag of the Sudanese national democratic revolution, to preserve the flags of democracy and socialism.

What we have to do is to rally the forces of the Party, to safeguard the existence of its leadership, to stand firm against the storm of terror and hysterical anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, and not to diverge from our fundamental way for a single instant. . . .

It is not proposed to give here a complete and detailed picture based on all the information and all the events in all the different centres of revolutionary activity, such as the military circumstances surrounding the movement of July 19. . . .

Our aim at present is to examine and assess what is happening in order to carry out our pressing immediate task, which is no more and no less than doing all we can, with all our power, all our possibilities, all our steadfastness, to safeguard the Communist Party, to protect it, keep it united, and to hold together the progressive revolutionary forces confronting the attack on them aiming at their physical liquidation or at least at their isolation from all political and social life in the country. . . .

There is no doubt that the Communist Party will be strengthened, that it will regain its place among the masses of the working class and the democratic movement, that its martyrs will be replaced in its ranks so as to safeguard its existence and the way forward for the democratic revolution. The Communist Party and the forces of the democratic revolution will learn lessons which will increase their strength and their wisdom from the victory of July 19. The Sudanese revolutionaries will learn how to defend their revolution with a determination worthy of revolutionaries, how to safeguard their victories with resolution which knows no hesitation. Negligence in the protection of the revolution is a crime for which history will not pardon the revolutionaries unless they learn from it lessons for their future struggles, and the mastery of the fundamental principle of revolutionary struggle that it is not enough to seize power, it is just as important to defend it not only in its early stage but continuously and at any cost. Had it not been for carelessness and negligence in this aspect, the counter-revolution and the bloody counter-attack would not have succeeded. . . .

The tremor on July 19 (1971) was, to their honour, the work of the Free Officers, one of the active sections of the National Democratic Front, and it will remain a shining landmark on our revolutionary road. The Party's co-operation in its support and its defence, together with the other progressive forces, will remain among the prominent landmarks in the history of our struggle. The causes of its weakness and of its defeat—both internal and external—will be lessons for the development of revolutionary action and success in the future of our people. The names of our martyrs are traced forever in the pages of our history. As for us, we shall bear the whole responsibility for learning from these experiences, correcting past mistakes, and breaching every rift in our

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolutionary action, with the strength and firmness with which they faced torture and death and the honour of martyrdom.

Weaknesses

The haste with which the military operation was carried out and the short life of the new power, do not hide the reality and content of what happened: namely, the success of the rising of the Free Officers and Soldiers, the support it received from the democratic movement, the fact that it remained in power for four days during which it stated its political programme and received public acclaim, and the fact that the movement of support was beginning to take a positive shape up to the demonstration of July 22. Among nationalist circles, the position of the July 19 regime towards independence, the sovereignty of law, and the liquidation of the terrorist and spying apparatus, made a profound impression. Within the movement of support, it was clear that the working class was active and deeply aware of the change that had taken place.

There were causes and factors, which have now become clear, which caused Free Officers and Soldiers not to persist in their military readiness to change the regime. But this was by no means the only weakness or mistake. Weaknesses occur in every revolutionary situation. But they do not become a cause for its liquidation unless the counter-revolutionary force which exploits them is itself influential and weighty. We consider that during those four days there was not within the country any force capable on its own of changing this early course, had it not been for the outside manoeuvres and instigation on the part of the Tripartite States,* and in particular on the part of Egypt and Libya, and the co-operation of British Intelligence with them.

At the same time, the military operation was taking place while three of its principal leaders—from the military and political point of view—were out of the country—Babiker Al Nur, Farouk Osman Hamadallah and Mohammed Mahjub Osman. The outside interference and manoeuvring was directed principally at the kidnapping of the plane (bringing them) in order to paralyse the power inside the country. Not only that, but the kidnapping and imprisonment of the Head of State is in practice a declaration of war under international law.

To this it must be added that the previous regime was isolated, weak and in a state of profound crisis, which made victory easy and quick, and popular reaction (with no surprise at its disappearance) generally prompt. This created an atmosphere of ease and neglect of the military situation and the measures needed to safeguard the regime and the initial victories. There was nothing to prevent the taking of the necessary defence measures by arming the revolutionary sections of the masses which, during their long experience, had learned the importance of protecting their operations and their activities. This led them to neglect steps to protect their power. It caused the revolutionary movement to neglect the most important principles for the defence of the revolution—the safeguarding of the initial victories without mercy and at all costs.

The Executive Committee of the Communist Party had placed this duty in the forefront of the tasks after the victory of the movement, to defend the new power so that the mass movement, whose task was to complete the revolutionary changeover, should not be exposed to the danger of adventurism and to other coups in the regular army. The leaders of July 19 knew of the preparations made by at least two groups which were preparing a coup as early as the previous May and that the supporters of these two groups were nearly ready (this is not the place to enter into details of the facts).

Tripartite Union Danger

Under the pressure of rapidly succeeding events, no clear assessment was made of the danger represented by the Tripartite Union, not from the point of view of their generally known policies, but from the point of view of their military and political interference even including manoeuvring with British circles in order to defeat the movement. This interference can be summed up as follows:

The role of the Egyptian Military College at Jebel Awliya, the role of the Egyptian air base at Wadi Saidna, and the role of the Egyptian military attaché.

The plane which arrived from Cairo under the pretext that it was bringing a message from Sadat and a number of personalities known for their relations with Sudanese progressive circles.

The co-operation between Libya, Egypt and British Intelligence in kidnapping the plane (bringing Al Nur); Sadat sending his War Minister with Khalid Hassan Abbas to Libya to outline the military measures intended for their intervention to prepare Egyptian paratroops and planes needed to transport Sudanese troops from the Suez Canal. The fact that Khalid Hassan Abbas was allowed to get in touch with the Sudanese forces at the Front and incite them, which led to discontent in their ranks and to some of them being detained in prison after their arrival; the statements made by Kadhafi† declaring that he would not recognise the Communist regime in the Sudan and that he would open Libya's

* i.e. the Union of Egypt, Libya and Syria.

† President of Libya.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doors to Sudanese refugees; the fact that Khalid Hassan Abbas instigated Sudanese armed forces to disobey; then Sadat stating that the Tripartite Union had teeth already at its birth as had been shown in the Sudan, and Jalloud stating that their forces had been ready to interfere, etc., etc.

The broadcasts from London and the United States played a clear and well defined role in rallying forces, far and near, against the danger of Communism in the Sudan.

The leaders of July 19 took a lenient attitude towards elements of the previous regime and especially towards the Revolutionary Council. They did not understand that since the coup of November 16, 1970, it had become a bridgehead for right-wing and counter-revolutionary forces, and a focal point for the forces opposed to progress and communism and all the forces which desired to liquidate the revolution; that it had become a platform for renegades to rally to in the early days after July 19.

Though the action of July 19 was for the aim of a critical revision of what had taken place, the nature of events indicated that this was not all and that it had become a new step for the revolution, and a change in the balance of forces in favour of the democratic forces. It was a turning point in the principal question, namely the orientation of the revolution i.e. whether to follow the non-capitalist road, or the road of capitalist development. This was the question that remained open after May 25, 1969. The struggle around this question continued until the right-wing orientation on November 16, 1970, towards freezing the revolution, the abolition of democracy, towards the single party, dictatorship in order to open the way to the right-wing and counter-revolution, towards the abandonment of the country's independence and submission to neo-imperialist circles and Arab oil producing countries.

The Meaning of July 19

. . . Within the current of the Sudanese revolution, July 19 represented a revolutionary change of political power carried out by the National Democratic Front and more precisely by the two sides of Sudanese democratic revolutionary forces, Democrats and Marxists. Within the Armed Forces, they were represented by the Organisation of the Free Officers and the Movement of Democratic Soldiers. It transferred power to the National Democratic Alliance as a whole, and not into the hands of any single section of it. For the first time, it was made clear that the Free Officers Organisation, which carried out the military operation, was one of the organisations of the National Democratic Front, in contrast to the traditional posture of leaders of military coups who speak in the name of the armed forces as a whole which they consider as a vanguard in relation to the popular movement, and who confuse the functions of the armed forces, as part of the apparatus of the State and an instrument of repression, with the role of the progressives within the armed forces.

The statements and declarations (of the leaders of July 19) made it clear that the basis of power was the rule by the Front at all levels in the Sudanese Republic, and this was also given shape in the Republican orders issued (by the new regime).

The men of July 19 enunciated very clearly also at constitutional level, the principles of the new democratic system. They began to consult the democratic organisations and the progressive forces about the formation of the Government and the instruments of power. They gave the democratic nationalist forces the right to organise their political parties. They cancelled the legislation and edicts which hampered their liberties; they dissolved the espionage system, terror and the Police State.

They opened the door for the popular struggle to achieve the tasks of the democratic revolution. They raised the flag of the rule of law and the independence of the legislature. They laid out landmarks to achieve political rights through democracy as a system of government, with a parliamentary system, an executive apparatus and the right of the masses to elect or reject their representatives. They adopted democracy in the relations of agricultural production in order to liberate the overwhelming majority of the population, and in order that the labourers should take part in the administration of production. They thus provided an opportunity for ending the conflict between political democracy and economic democracy. They also made democracy a condition and a means to unify the two parts of the country, the North and the South, and to solve the problem of the South.

They raised the flag of independence and national sovereignty, and asserted its role in the movement for Arab and African revolutionary unity, as well as its role in the anti-imperialist front and its relationship to the socialist countries and the Soviet Union in particular.

July 19 revealed an essential and important truth, which is that there is an alternative (potential and objective, with live revolutionary cadres) to the dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie or of one of its sections. It thus dealt a strong blow at the theories which consider this dictatorship a historical necessity with the working class and the revolutionary movement living or co-existing in its shadow, in submission and humility.

This is the reason why the military regimes of the petty bourgeoisie—and more precisely of the Arab nationalists—follow a path which leads to the liquidation of the revolution. The Sudanese

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

experiment has shown that to agree to such a path, under the threat or fear of counter-revolution, only leads to that section of the petty bourgeoisie which has monopolised power itself becoming counter-revolutionary, either by oppressing the revolution and liquidating it, or by its political and economic policies and its submissiveness to the influence of neo-colonialism.

July 19 has pointed out the progressive alternative. It has also shown the necessity for vigilance to protect it not only from imperialism but also from Arab right wing forces. . . .

Counter-Revolutionary Propaganda

The circumstances which surrounded the coup of July 22, 1971, and then its complete victory, brought the reactionaries out of different and numerous corners, united in their propaganda on a number of essential points.

1. They quickly moved to hide the realities of the butchery at the Presidential Palace (Beit el Diafa) which was carried out by tanks, by the forces behind the July 22 coup whose aim was first and foremost to abolish the action of July 19, and by the leaders and officers of the old regime eager to regain power for themselves. This is why they attacked the Presidential Palace, the Republican Palace and the General Command quarters with the same intense fire. Not only that, but they brought the corpses of some of the dead outside the presidential palace and added them to the corpses of the dead officers.

We must state the following facts:

The Sudanese Communist Party had no relation, direct or indirect, with the events at Beit el Diafa.

The leaders of July 19 did not issue any order to kill the prisoners, and the proof is that these had spent four days in detention and received a reasonable treatment. Had there been any such order, it would have been first of all against the members of the Revolutionary Council.

The tanks which attacked the palace used their heavy guns and caused great damage to the foundations of the building. The traces of the bomb splinters could be seen on the bodies of the dead officers, which belies the tales that they had been shot with guns and machine guns. . . .

The authorities have exploited the question of Beit el Diafa to cover up the killing of 200 unarmed soldiers without trial, and those who committed this crime and to justify the massacres that they carried out with the bestial revenge of the petty bourgeoisie when it fears for its rule or its property.

2. They started a most intense campaign of hate against the Soviet Union and the Socialist states. Let us note that they only started this campaign on the fourth day, when the campaign of solidarity with their victims was becoming widespread in denunciation of the bloodbaths. At the press conference held on July 24 Nimeiry had denied that there was any connection between the Soviet Union and events in the Sudan. In answer to the world campaign which compelled them to stop the executions, they improvised the lies about Soviet intervention and they persisted in order to convince capitalists and imperialists that they had definitely renounced their previous honeyed words on their relations with the Soviet Union and the Socialist states.

3. They used every means of propaganda to spread the lie that the people had crushed the communists, that the people had co-operated with the forces which had carried out the July 22 coup to restore Nimeiry's rule. The people of the capital and of its streets know that this is a lie. The most they could do was to organise the demonstration of August 14 to which they brought people from the countryside and various places through the intermediary of those men who organised this mobilisation in the days of Abboud.

4. They said that their campaign was solely against the Communist Party, against members of the Communist Party. But a quick look at the political and ideological sympathies of those in the concentration camps and the prisons makes it clear that the campaign is against the progressive forces as a whole. Anti-communism as a policy does not stop at the communists, it is inimical to every progressive movement. . . .

5. The regime attributed its failures and all its mistakes to the communists. This is natural, since the regime is in the hands of renegades and counter-revolutionaries. But unfortunately for them, the Party had, especially after November 16 (1970) made its position clear on every problem, and analysed the regime's own failures, mistakes and lies. The position of the opportunists themselves also demonstrated the real stand of the communists towards the policies of the regime. The coup of November 16 marked, in fact, the end of any co-operation between the Communist Party and the regime, and the people of our country saw for themselves the enmity of the regime towards the Party's existence in the weeks which followed that coup, as shown by the setting up of the committee for the defence of the revolution, the warnings against the wreckers and the imprisonment of the martyr Abdel Khalek Mahjub and others. The regime was following its own line, from May 25, aiming at the destruction of the Communist Party. . . .

This was the meaning of the July 22.

A Bloody Right Turn

What happened on the evening of that day was not only a military countercoup, and not a mechanical return to the old regime. It was a bloody right-wing turn in the road of the Sudanese revolution, and

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not a temporary reaction of a shorter or longer duration as represented in Heikal's articles. Unless this truth is clearly understood about the character of the regime, our popular movement will become confused, scattered and lost, and the revolutionary movement will not be aware of the real nature of its enemies and the effort it must be prepared to make as it recovers its strength to resume the struggle.

They took advantage of the mistakes and weaknesses of the July 19 movement. But the social and political forces which instigated them and which are still endeavouring to find their own place at the various levels of the regime, are forces hostile to communism, to progress, to democracy and to the social revolution. They are a social force with definite class interests within the Sudan and outside the Sudan. . . . We know these forces and their interests which are served by the present regime. We know the role that Egypt has played and is still playing to maintain her presence and her influence in the Sudan. . . .

The Egyptian regime knows the weakness of the coup it itself prepared in the Sudan by means of the Arab Nationalists in May 1969 very well. The Egyptian rulers knew that the regime was relying on the communists and the democratic movement loyal to the common struggle, to unity and to the Arab revolution as part of the social revolution in the Sudan. When they realised that the forces of change were becoming stronger, and they wanted to impose the Tripartite Union, they went ahead with the coup of November 16 (1970) and the anti-communist campaign. This meant opening the door to the right-wing forces. The Egyptian regime then manoeuvred and suppressed the July 19 movement whose programme threw a searchlight on the Sudan's relations with Egypt and with the Arab revolution. This programme would have washed away the poisons which had marred Arab relations with the Sudan.

The Egyptians believed that they had recovered their authority over the dead bodies of Abdel Khaleg[1], Al Shaffi[2] and Yusif[3], who had held on their shoulders the defence of the Arab fatherland, who had organised the solidarity movement with Egypt in 1956, and later during the Halaib crisis, and in every battle. These were the men who were at the head of the popular movement during those times; they guided it. They were behind the demonstrations welcoming Abdel Nasser; they helped the Arab Conference in Khartum, they paralysed the manoeuvres of the reactionaries and compelled them to send Sudanese armed forces to the front and to open the Sudanese airbases to Arab planes after the destruction of the Egyptian air bases. . . .

Let the Egyptian regime taste the drink with which it poisoned the communist and progressive movement in the Sudan. Let Sadat keep to himself his deceitful intercession in favour of Shaffi. What speaks on behalf of Shaffi and his comrades is their history, the Party that they built and which will not be destroyed, and the trade union and popular movement which will not be cowed. The principle of the defence of Egypt's rear was laid down by Abdel Khalek and Al Shaffi and Yusif as a duty of the revolutionary movement and the Communist Party. Now the revolutionary movement must protect its own rear from the threats coming from the North. Our revolutionary movement thus finds itself with an additional burden. But the Egyptian working class and its progressive forces will return to the common struggle and will return to its roots which were laid down during the 1940s, in the heart of the communist and democratic movement in Egypt.

It is true that the counter revolution came on the crest of a right-wing wave in the region, but it is also true that it happened as the class struggle in the Sudan and the region was sharpening, at a time when fundamental sections of our popular movement were advancing towards new positions, no longer accepting the stultification of the revolution, or the Egyptian way as a model, or the leadership of the Arab Nationalist section of the petty bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the coup took place to achieve the fundamental aims of counter-revolution in the Sudan; the physical liquidation of the democratic movement and the Communist Party, the return to the past of capitalist development and of the influence of colonialism, with democratic slogans emptied of their content, with the consolidation of relations with right-wing States and the liquidation of the benefits which accrued to our people from our relations with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, with the erection of barriers against the Soviet Union in the diplomatic and commercial fields while at the same time safeguarding Egypt's needs and her reliance on Soviet assistance.

Setback for National Liberation

The setback was not merely a local event. It was a setback for the movement of national liberation in the region and in Africa. It also represented the return to the capitalist path, and the trend to a political block or a single party. . . . The experience of the Sudan has demonstrated—at least for us—that anti-colonialism (and more especially anti-neo-colonialism) and social advance cannot possibly

[1] i.e. the General Secretary of the Sudanese Communist Party.

[2] i.e. the General Secretary of the Sudanese Federation of Trade Unions.

[3] Joseph Garang, former Minister for the South and leading Communist.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proceed without being linked inside the country with the democratic revolution, on the basis of the rule of a democratic alliance and the application of democracy in all aspects of life (the State apparatus, the parties forming the democratic alliance, the various organisations). They cannot proceed while the leadership is in the sole hands of a section of the petty bourgeoisie which imposes its ideology, which imposes on the other classes their inclusion in the Socialist Union, depriving them of their right to form their own parties and their own programmes. . . .

The recent period has been marked by active efforts to liquidate the revolutionary movement and at the same time to legitimise fascist methods in government and in political activity:

—Executions, tortures, life sentences, sham tribunals, unlimited detentions, dismissals and expulsions.

—The sham plebiscite which misrepresents the popular will.

—The imposition of the Presidential system and personal rule.

—The President's decisions and laws and Republican Orders.

—Anti-communism as a policy and a method.

—The open door to all neo-colonialist bodies and institutions, in particular the World Bank and the monopolies to which it opens the way.

—The closing down of all democratic organisations, the imposition of the single political party, the liquidation of the trade union movement and the suppression of the working class movement to remove the obstacle to capitalist development and to the return of foreign capital. . . .

The Future of the Sudanese Revolution

The victory of the counter-revolution has not changed the nature of the present stage, but it has drastically changed the balance of forces at this stage in favour of the right-wing forces, in favour of capitalist methods and the control of neo-colonialism, of backwardness and subordination. Hard conditions and obstacles have been created for the revolutionary struggle of the popular movement, which has also been deprived of all the democratic organisations which were its weapons in the struggle; it has lost what freedom of action it had and those democratic liberties which it had gained through persistent struggle. . . .

It is clear that the regime will subordinate everything to the interests of capitalist development, including both the old and the newer parts of the public sector, after all the efforts spent to build up the public sector.

Our basic tactic remains to unite the masses into a national democratic front. Our only way forward is through the mobilisation of all our potential, the creation of suitable conditions and suitable political lines for mass struggle and for the expansion of the democratic movement. For this, the only means is mass activity for which there is no substitute.

The difficulties and obstacles we are facing are enormous. But they can be overcome through patient persistent action, carried out tirelessly and relentlessly to bring the mass movement forward to play its own role. . . . This is not the first time in our history that we have to build the party and the democratic movement. The counter-revolution has not destroyed the Party or the assets of the democratic movement. The anger of our people is increasing. We shall rally the forces once again, and in the new situation new methods are needed for the leadership, for the actual work, for security and resistance. We are facing a long and hard battle for which we shall become prepared with every step that we shall take with energy and determination. . . .

We must not indulge in wishful thinking or superficial estimates of circumstances and risks; but we must build on the fact that the roots of the democratic revolution, the roots of our Communist Party, the roots of the popular movement in the Sudan are deep and have not been killed by the present regime. Their influence on the minds and conscience of our people cannot be dispelled.

As for the Arab Nationalists group, they were and still are unable to form a political or military leadership which can unify the people or gain the loyalty of the army. Despite the right-wing alliance to which the regime has had recourse, it remains isolated. The Arab regimes which support it also enjoy no confidence and no respect in the Sudan, and besides they have their own problems, the problems of their occupied lands and of their internal problems with their people. The regime is also isolated from the international democratic movement, which it can no longer deceive.

The report of our Executive Committee of July 20 (1971) noted that the regime was then unable to satisfy the people's needs and its concept of honour. Now, it is even less able to satisfy the people, which has had the experience of the deterioration of living conditions and the domination of foreign finance capital during the first military dictatorship. . . .

Wherever people meet they ask—Where to? And How? And they turn towards the Communist Party, want to know the opinion of the Communist Party. This truth must be understood by communists and progressives. The only centre for struggle, opposition and resistance is the Communist Party, the party of the Sudanese working class. We must therefore respond in the most responsible way and raise ourselves to the level of the high confidence which the people have placed in the Communist Party and in its martyred leaders. We are facing a regime which is determined to use any and every means to liquidate the revolutionary movement

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and to subject the people by the same bloody methods which it used to gain power, and which it would no doubt use again to remain in power. Bloody force will also be the means to abolish it in the end. When our popular movement enters its own path, it must this time protect its rear and fight any remaining tendency of negligence or indifference towards armed right-wing violence. Weapons in the hands of nationalists and democrats in the armed forces are not enough; there is no substitute for the weapons in the hands of the revolutionary masses as we learned from the experience of October and from July 19. . . .

We must act patiently, wisely and without haste. We shall advance step by step, in deep awareness of the need to safeguard our Party, and of our responsibility, inspired by the mass movement, by the courage of the martyrs of July 19, by the firmness of the prisoners and the detainees, by the hopes of our people and our working class—confident of victory and immune against the spirit of defeatism and submission. . . .

Labour History

The General Strike in Nottingham

Peter Wyncoll

1926 for the Nottingham Working Class was a grim year. The bottom had long ago dropped out of Lloyd George's "Land Fit For Heroes" and the town's mining community in particular was enduring terrible hardship. During April 1926 the town's unemployed figure stood at 6,143, whilst a further 1,447 were either on short time or stood off.[1] The figures for those in receipt of Poor Relief, are just as shocking. During April they numbered 13,335 whilst in May (the month of the General Strike) they shot up to 59,384 so that only the figures for London, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Wigan were higher.[2]

Conditions like this had been with the town since shortly after the First World War. One of the earliest recollections of Jack Charlesworth for many years the Secretary of Nottingham Trades Council, is of seeing a family being driven to the workhouse in the early years of the century:

> "One of my earliest memories is of seeing a family being driven to the workhouse in a hansom cab . . . I remember all the neighbours turning out to see this wife and about four children being driven to the workhouse, they were waving and it was almost a ceremonial procession".[3]

A skilled hosiery worker, Jack remembers the years before 1926 as extremely lean ones, with short time working being the rule. The Nottinghamshire coalfield too, was going through hard times, and in the period immediately prior to the General Strike, collier George Hamilton who worked at Bestwood pit remembers having to leave school because with nine in the family the money he could earn as an errand lad was vital to the family exchequer.[4]

Arthur Statham, a keen member of the town's ILP branch, who had spent the war years in Dartmoor as a conscientious objector, remembered a gradual feeling developing among the townspeople prior to the strike that "something should be done for the miners."[5] Cyril Goddard, also an objector to the war, never actually attended school for more than a few days at a time because of the need to help support the family, and he remembers long spells of unemployment before the strike. Like Arthur Statham, Cyril remembers a strong feeling in the town that the miners were getting a "dirty deal"[6] and a general atmosphere of gloom as the depression deepened.

As the economic climate cooled, conditions in all of Britain's industrial centres gradually worsened. In Nottingham and its surrounding area however, conditions were particularly bad because of the heavy dependence on the mining industry, and although tobacco and light engineering had taken their place alongside mining and hosiery as the

[1] Nottingham Evening Post, May 1, 1926.
[2] Labour Research Dept., July 1926, Vol. 15, No. 7.
[3] Jack Charlesworth: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.
[4] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1969.
[5] Arthur Statham: Tape Recording, Jan. 11, 1969.
[6] Cyril Goddard: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

area's main fields of employment, they had not been able to force the town's labour movement into any more obedient mould than had the mine owners, so that in 1926 there is ample evidence that the class forces of the area like those of the rest of the country were preparing for a major confrontation.

Preparing for the Battle

The months leading up to the General Strike followed a long period of sharpening class conflict. By the early months of 1926 every element within the British capitalist class was convinced of the need for a major showdown with organised labour, and they quickly began the task of creating the organisational weapons with which the battle would be fought. In late September 1925 the formation of a body called the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies was announced. Its leadership was packed with retired military gentlemen and its object was quite clearly to break a General Strike.

The Government itself took rapid steps to organise for a major confrontation. England and Wales were divided into divisions, each under a Civil Commissioner with a group of previously appointed civil servants to assist him. Each of the ten divisions had beneath it a network of local committees each with its own intricate organisation. The Divisional Officers were given full power under various Emergency Powers Acts, and they were empowered to requisition, and to fix prices. In December 1925, and January 1926 conferences were held between national and local officials; two more conferences were held in March, and all that was needed for this elaborate organisation to swing into operation was the receipt of a telegram containing the single word "Action".

As the capitalist class generally began to take the offensive the Labour Movement's response was hesitant and timid. By and large the constant warnings of the Communist Party and other militants to prepare for a massive confrontation went unheeded. Indeed the class collaborationists within the Trade Union and Labour Movement mounted a vicious attack on these progressive elements, and at the Liverpool Conference of the Labour Party the right-wing pushed through a resolution expelling Communists from the Labour Party.

Against this background the crisis in the coal industry deepened. In an effort to take the heat out of the situation the Government had set up a Royal Commission and much was hoped of its report. The miners however expected little, and although the General Council of the TUC seemed to place a lot of confidence in it, the miner's leadership prepared for the worst. In March 1926 the Commission reported. Pared to the bone, it rejected the demand for nationalisation, and proposed an immediate reduction in wages. These two recommendations were wrapped in a mass of woolly generalisations and vague concilitory proposals so that the right-wing leaders of the TUC and the Labour Party were able to hail the report as a victory.

During April the positions of the two sides began to harden. The Miners Federation on April 9 rejected the essence of the Royal Commissions Report, and issued instructions to its District Federations that the working day must not be lengthened, the principle of the minimum wage must be adhered to and that no cut in wages must be accepted. There followed a complex series of meetings involving the Miners Federation, the Mine-owners, the General Council and the Government all predictably ended in deadlock.

On April 29 a special Conference of Trade Union Executives met to consider the position. In the face of the mineowners' refusal to agree a compromise solution, the conference was forced to draw up proposals for co-ordinated action. On May 1 the Cabinet put into action the Emergency Powers Act; troop movements followed, and a call for volunteers was issued by the OMS. In the days which remained before the deadline set by the Conference of Trade Union Executives ran out, the General Council of the TUC did everything in their power to achieve a compromise solution. All TUC approaches to the Government were rejected, and after the print workers at the *Daily Mail* had refused to print a vitriolic attack on the Trade Union Movement the Government broke off negotiations, and at midnight on May 3 the General Strike broke out.

The Capitalists Prepare

In Nottingham the Government's decision to set up strike-breaking machinery on a divisional basis had been quickly carried through. Captain H. Douglas King MP had been named as Commissioner for the North Midland district. His object was to maintain all essential services and on May 3 immediately prior to the strike he issued a statement that, "the public can be assured that all preliminary steps have been taken to ensure the maintenance of supplies of necessities."[7] In fact a great deal of work had gone into setting up elaborate strike-breaking machinery. There were people in every district prepared to open offices and enlist volunteers as soon as they received the signal. The North Midlands was divided into eight districts each with a Chairman, Road, Coal, Postage, Haulage, Food, and Finance Officers and the class background of these gentlemen is made obvious by the fact that three more of Captain Douglas King's staff were recruited from the military, whilst the rest came from the business community.

The town's capitalists had also been busy setting

[7] Nottingham Guardian, May 3, 1926.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

up a local Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies. On the eve of the strike a Volunteer Recruiting Office was opened, and advertisements calling for volunteers placed in the local press. According to one report there were about five thousand volunteers in Nottingham but this estimate is almost certainly inflated, since at a meeting of the Organisation on April 30 it was stated that in some parts of the County doors had been slammed in the faces of the Organisation's canvassers.[8] In fact it was reported that the Organisation was established in 118 parishes out of the 260 in the Nottingham area. How strong these local groups were is uncertain. Captain H. C. Serbrooke DSO and Mr. H. D. Cherry-Downes both felt that many people had refused to sign on with the Organisation because they feared victimisation. However, Captain Turner reported that the Organisation's Headquarters was disgusted that so little had been done in Nottingham. He made the point that a poster campaign in West Bridgford had absolutely no effect, whilst Cherry-Downes advanced the view that the Unions had passed the word to have nothing to do with the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies.

The activities of the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies were paralleled by the Volunteer Service Committee under the leadership of Major Stuart Hartshorn CBE. This Committee was active in recruiting Special Constables and during the strike over a thousand were sworn in. Amongst these worthies was Sir Ernest Jardine who personally marched 130 of his staff to the Guildhall where they were sworn in. Jardine's friend A. W. Kirkaldy, the President of the Chamber of Commerce, was appointed officer commanding one of the volunteer companies, and the Chamber's leading role in the strike-breaking forces is further emphasised by the appointment of its Secretary as one of the six Superintendents of the volunteer forces.

In fact, the organised blacklegging of the Chamber of Commerce was very highly developed. When the strike started it placed its transport unreservedly at the disposal of the Civil Commissioner. During the strike the transport department, the only one of its kind in the country, maintained a regular service to and from London. Its vehicles were in use carrying not only food, but lace, hosiery, tobacco, medical supplies, made-up goods, and other products of the Nottingham factories. The Chamber took over a warehouse in the Lace Market which it used as a clearing house whilst maintaining a daily service to London, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester.

The business-dominated City Council too, was fully prepared to back strike-breaking activity to the hilt. Leading members like Alderman Sir Bernard Wright, and Alderman Albert Ball, were appointed to take such steps as they considered necessary to deal with the strike situation. Perhaps remembering the manner in which the town's workers had fired the Castle in the Reform Bill riots of 1831, their first decision was to close the Castle to the public. Many of the town's Aldermen and Councillors were intimately connected with the town's industrial life, and it is not surprising that they regarded the strike as a fundamental threat to their class position. At every opportunity during its duration the Council came down firmly on the side of the State, and it is likely that they took Baldwin's pre-strike advice to "keep steady. Remember that peace on earth comes to men of goodwill"[9] with a pinch of salt. It is probable too that the Bishop of Southwell's first sermon in the town in which he urged his listeners, "remain calm and hopeful" met with a mixed reception from those worthies of the town's establishment who for months had been preparing for a major showdown.

The Contrast

In contrast with the speed and relative efficiency with which the local representatives of capital made their preparations for the coming confrontation, the Nottingham Labour Movement's battle preparations were slow and hesitant. At the September 1925 meeting of the Trades Council it was reported that a local meeting of the industries concerned in the Quadruple Alliance had been held, at which it was resolved to form a local Council of Action. From this it would seem that Nottingham's organised workers had been influenced by the warnings of the Communists and were prepared to regard Red Friday as only the first round in a long struggle. Tragically however, the support given by the national leaders to the local Trades Councils was timid and ineffective. At the October 1925 meeting of the Nottingham Trades Council the Secretary reported that the activities of the local Council of Action were being held up because of his inability to obtain information from the national leaders. In December the situation was no better with the Secretary reporting that the Council of Action machinery had now seized up owing to the lack of guidance from the central bodies concerned, the whole question he said had now been referred to the General Council of the TUC.

The 1926 Trades Council elections produced a mixed leadership from craft and general unions. Of the collective leadership the miners provided only Tom Willoughby, although W. Askew of the Nottinghamshire Miners acted as one of the Trades Council's Labour Party delegates. Of the leadership in 1926 Billy Lees of the Distributive Workers was probably the most politically motivated and class

[8] Nottingham Guardian, April 30, 1926.

[9] Nottingham Journal, May 3, 1926.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

conscious. He was an early supporter of the Communist Party and during the strike he was the only one of the local leadership to be arrested and imprisoned.

Politically the town's left wing in 1926 was many sided. The Labour Party, the Independent Labour Party, and the Communist Party all had active groups. Since the end of the war the town's Socialists had increased their numbers considerably. Many of these converts had come to the left through admiration of the new Russian State, and many more after bitter periods of unemployment in the period leading up to the strike. The Labour Party was of course the strongest of the left wing elements in the town, although the ILP claimed over 500 members. Many of the Labour Party's best activists had however left the party when the Communist Party was formed in 1920. To many on the left the Labour Party was already being seen as a reformist force. Jack Charlesworth for instance remembers its leadership as, "really reactionary".[10] Cyril Goddard would agree with this view and he remembers most of the local Labour Party's leaders as being careerists of one sort or another. "The majority of the Labour Party boys were out for a career, if they hadn't been in the Labour Party they would have been in the Tory Party if it offered them a career."[11]

The political work of the town's Socialists was based on the ILP's hall, and on rooms used by several groups in the William Morris Institute. These rooms were used by the Socialist Sunday School, Clarion Supporters, ILP and Communist Party supporters, as well as the Labour Party for a variety of social and educational activities which bore fruit in what Arthur Statham described as a "nightly hive of activity".[12] The town's famous Cosmopolitan Debating Society was at the height of its activity as a left wing forum, and the Labour Movement's press had never been so widely read and appreciated. The *Herald*, The *Clarion*, and *Reynolds News* were all popular. Jack Charlesworth remembers selling Labour papers in the Market Square and outside cinemas, whilst other veterans helped to build up sales by door to door sales.

The Strike Begins

Most of the political activists in the town were also active in the trade union movement, and these links were well demonstrated at the 1926 May Day demonstration. Taking place only a day before the strike broke out the demonstration was the biggest in the town for some years. Assembling on the Forest several thousand workers heard Alderman H. Bowles assure them that at midnight the local labour movement would stand wholeheartedly with the miners. Arthur Hayday MP for West Nottingham declared that the trouble represented the breakdown of modern capitalism, whilst the President of the Trades Council told the crowd that unless the Government capitulated and saw that justice was done they would have the whole of the workers against them.

This meeting took place in the afternoon of May 2; the morning had seen a procession which eclipsed all previous records for size and display. The parade took nearly half-an-hour to pass any given point, and as a spectacle and pageant it "drew applause even from those who had little sympathy with the ideals of those taking part." The local paper records several interesting costume groups including one arranged by the Sherwood Ward Labour Party in which Friar Tuck led a pony on which rode Maid Marian, accompanied by Robin Hood and his Merry Men. A touch of humour was supplied by a humble pram labelled, "The Workers Daimler" and a derelict motor car dragged by two cart horses in which sat a miner carrying a placard declaring "both broke". A group of ILP paper sellers dressed in French Revolution costume also took part, and the procession was led by bands playing the *Red Flag*. Perhaps the most popular tableau was one which featured a satire in which a hearse carrying the "Death of Capitalism" was followed by a vehicle on which the "Birth of Socialism" was illustrated.

In the evening several more meetings were held. At the ILP rally the group's chairman warned, "the war in which we are about to engage might not bring bayonet and shell but it will bring sorrow and danger".[13] On the same evening at another demonstration Mr. J. H. Hayes MP told his audience, "do not play the enemy's game, don't allow yourself to come into conflict with the OMS or the Fascisti, treat them with contempt."[14] The Communist Party's pre-strike meeting was held on the same evening and Cyril Goddard remembers it well; "the Party was fully alive to the fact that the Government was organising and the TUC was doing nothing . . . at our meeting I remember the speaker Harry Webb, the 'Mighty Atom'* we called him, making the point-watch your leaders . . . and by God they took some watching."[15]

The workers of Nottingham then, spent the day before the strike began demonstrating their solidarity with the miners and the International Labour

[10] Jack Charlesworth: Tape Recording Jan. 12, 1969.

[11] Cyril Goddard: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.

[12] Arthur Statham: Tape Recording, Jan. 11, 1969.

[13] Nottingham Journal, May 3, 1926.

[14] Nottingham Journal, May 3, 1926.

* Harry Webb was rather small but had a voice of immense power.

[15] Cyril Goddard: Tape Recording Jan. 12, 1969.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Movement. Their mood was optimistic, Jack Charlesworth remembers that when many of the pubs closed at 10 p.m. the *Red Flag* was the last song sung. Unfortunately as the strike progressed, the optimism of the Nottingham workers would change into one of depression as the betrayal of the national leadership became more and more obvious. Meanwhile the day before the strike commenced it was a bouyant and optimistic Labour Movement which looked forward to the coming struggle.

Despite the confusion of the pre-strike period, the Trades Council acted quickly on May 3. A Nottingham and District Joint Advisory Dispute Committee was quickly formed at a meeting convened by telegram. It was resolved at this meeting that the Strike Committee should be composed of two representatives of each of the unions involved in the dispute together with the whole of the Trades Council Executive, and delegates from Long Eaton and Netherfield. Whilst the strike was on the Committee sat every day, as did the sub-committees which it appointed to deal with the questions of permits, publicity, meetings, and outside pickets.

The First Days

As far as the rank and file were concerned their response to the strike was magnificent. The TUC's official report on the strike records the fact, that Nottingham was amongst the towns where the response was "unexpectedly and amazingly fine".[16]

The strike call was answered first by transport workers and those employed in heavy industry leading the walk out. On this first day of the strike the local evening paper managed to produce an edition which carried a story detailing "great activity" outside the offices of the T&GWU and the NUGMW where workers not yet called out were anxiously inquiring if they could cease work. Huge meetings of transport workers and railwaymen were held in various parts of the town, and the mood was summed up at a joint meeting of the three rail unions where Mr. W. Halls, the NUR District Organiser, after appealing for order and discipline went on: "we knew this day was bound to come sooner or later and we ought to be glad. It is a day we have hoped for and prayed for and looked forward to . . . we ought to be delighted."[17]

Meanwhile the sub-committees of the Strike Committee had swung into action. Of these the most important was the group of men responsible for considering and endorsing permits for the removal of foodstuffs. It was through this Committee's work that the power and authority of the workers was most dramatically demonstrated, and the workers Strike Bulletin of May 6 was able to report, "Mr. Harding the area food controller, has undertaken to move no food except by permission of the Strike Committee. He does not recognise the OMS."[18]

May 4 saw the first real excitement of the strike. Both the bus and tram services were idle, and the few private buses which ventured into the town were attacked and overturned. During one demonstration the private car belonging to a local bus proprietor was turned over. This proprietor made a determined effort to run his bus fleet with non-union labour, but after a great deal of trouble with pickets who in some cases removed the carburettors of his buses, he discontinued the effort about noon. Later on May 4, some two thousand strikers toured the Queens Drive area and demanded that work should stop at a number of local factories. After they had rushed the Nottingham Brewery Company, the police were called and scuffles and fights broke out. Later they visited the Midland Timber Company, and the works of Messrs Jardine, but since they were accompanied by a strong force of police they were unsuccessful in their attempt to call out the workers of these firms. Despite these disappointments however, the strikers were able to halt a motor lorry owned by Skinner and Rook, and were successful in removing its load of beer and groceries before the police arrived.

Predictably the class forces opposed to the workers didn't take kindly to this kind of activity. The local evening paper ran an editorial on May 4 which spelt out the attitude of the establishment:

> "We now wish to record our protest against the use of the General Strike as a weapon with which to settle a sectional dispute . . . we imagine there is very little enthusiasm for a General Strike amongst the vast majority of workers. . . ."[19]

The writer of this editorial soon found out how wrong was his assumption that there was little enthusiasm for the strike when on the morning of May 5, his own printers walked off the job. Nottingham's other newspaper was also hit by the strike. During the strike it managed to produce a duplicated sheet containing national news items, a summary of parliamentary debates, and the cricket scores. The owners of the local press were predictably outraged at the interference with their ability to make profits, and on resuming publication published the usual hypocritical editorials calling for, "the unqualified support of every man and woman who values the English birthright of personal liberty and freedom of the press."[20]

[16] TUC General Council: The Mining Crisis and the National Strike 1927.

[17] Nottingham Guardian May 4, 1926.

[18] Nottingham Strike Bulletin No. 1., May 1926.

[19] Nottingham Guardian May 4, 1926.

[20] Evening Post, May 10, 1926.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Strike Bulletin

The strikers answer to the lack of news, and blackleg news sheets was to produce their own official *Strike Bulletin*. First produced on May 6 the *Bulletin* was issued twice daily during the dispute, and issue number one warned workers to ignore "any Government or anti-strike propaganda publications, obviously inspired to mislead the public and to attempt to break the General Strike."[21] The ILP Labour Hall was quickly turned into the strikers' main communication centre, and it, together with the People's Hall, soon became the Strike Committee Headquarters, from which issued the instructions which over the nine days of the strike challenged again and again the assumptions of generations of the town's ruling group.

As the strike developed every facet of life in the town became affected. The most exciting incidents were mostly concerned with the various attempts to re-open some kind of transport service. Earnest supporters of the Establishment did their best to organise a private transport system by using volunteers owning private cars. Miss Kentish Wright was able to boast that she had saved hundreds of women and girls long walks to work by the private service which she organised morning and evening from Basford, Bulwell, Daybrook, Sherwood, Netherfield, and Bridgford, into the centre of the city. Meanwhile the strike among railwaymen continued almost 100 per cent solid. On May 10 the LMS claimed it was running 32 trains, and the LNER 31. The official strike bulletin however claimed that "the much vaunted service is being maintained by the same engine, train, driver, and guard, who work about 16 hours each day."[22]

It was because of blacklegging attempts of one sort or another that the various disturbances which broke out from time to time during the strike were provoked. Early in the strike a crowd of about 500 went to Player's tobacco factory to encourage the workers to join the strike, and when they were met by a force of police with drawn batons a serious fight broke out. Several of the strikers were felled to the ground, stones were thrown, and one man who rushed out from the crowd was arrested. Later a running fight developed in the town's main streets before the police finally managed to disperse the crowds.

The Arrests

As a result of these incidents a man was charged with committing an act likely to cause disaffection, and with assulting a policeman by kicking him on the leg, and tearing his trousers. Found guilty this 22 year old miner was sentenced to six months. Later in the week four others were charged with committing an act likely to impede or restrict transport. All four were employed at a brewery and on May 8 they were outside their depot. There was a bus outside and the four men went over to the driver and conductor and used threats of violence against the blacklegs, telling them that if they went on with the bus they would wait for them with a Mills bomb on the return journey. At this point the men were taken into custody and they were subsequently fined two pounds each.

Two days later a motor bus driver was arrested for trying to stop another transport department worker reporting for work. At 7.15 a.m. the striking worker spotted the blackleg cycling to work, tried to push him from his bicycle, whilst at the same time shouting, "where are you going? Be a man you dirty dog."[23] Fined two pounds for this dastardly crime this worker was only one of the thousands of Nottingham workers who regarded blacklegs as the lowest form of life. Certainly this view would have been shared by the striker sentenced to three months for inciting a crowd in Long Row and the centre of the town.

Over the period of the strike something like a dozen arrests were made, some of course much more serious than others. George Hamilton for instance remembers the following incident involving miners scavenging for coal on the pit tips:

> "Best laugh I ever had. They were on Cinderhill pit bank, they'd got roughly eight bags of coal, each bag would weigh roughly 100cwt. and a half, and of course the police pounced on them. The lads had got a nice donkey and cart, and when the police arrived they said 'come on load these bags', the lads said 'not bloody likely, you want them on, you put them on yourself', and it was worth the fine to see the police struggling to put them on. Well the donkey belonged to a rag and bone man and it would only move for either him or a boy who worked with it, but he'd seen the police coming and made his escape. Anyway they got the bags on and it was 'Gee up Neddy', but it wouldn't have it, so anyway it finished up with one policeman at its head and three shoving, and they had to shove him right to Bulwell. When they got to Burr Street where the rag and bone man lived, the police knocked at his door, course he was in bed, so he put his head out of the window and said, 'go on lock him up same as the rest' but as soon as the donkey heard his master shouting he sat down and started braying. By this time there was a big crowd, four hundred people, laughing at the police and enjoying themselves, anyway they had to shove the donkey into the police yard and next day they fined them 2/6d a piece".[24]

[21] Nottingham Strike Bulletin No. 1, 1926.
[22] Nottingham Strike Bulletin.
[23] Nottingham Journal, May 13, 1926.
[24] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1969.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Clash

George Hamilton was no lover of the police; he described the local Inspector thus, "he was a pig . . . we called him Vesta Tilly because he was so smart."[25] At one point during the miners' strike George was picketing one of the local pits when a typical clash between police and strikers took place, "there was four of us . . . we hadn't been there many minutes before down came a police van with about six police in it. They got out and told us the old tale, they were working class people and all the rest of it. So when they started hustling and bustling, my mate who was only 5ft. 6ins. said, 'now mate if you feel like that, come to the kick hole top in the field and me and my mate will take the best two of you'."[26]

Arthur Statham too had personal memories of the police and arrests which they made. Arthur's cousin Herbert Saunders who was employed at a brewery as a carter is remembered by Arthur as bursting into the office in which Arthur was working in a very agitated state. "He burst in shouting, 'Arthur they are trying to take out beer, I'm going to see about this' and off he went you see, anyway when he got there he was arrested and he went to Lincoln like Billy Lees for three months." Arthur was able to remember the arrest of Lees since the two men were working together when Inspector Castle made the arrest. "Billy was a very lively character and he said to Castle in a joking way, 'I've been expecting you' . . . I've never forgotten that."[27]

The arrest of Lees, together with that of Thomas Kilworth were probably the most significant of the strike period. Both these men were political animals. Lees was a communist and a member of the Trades Council Executive, and Kilworth was a defeated candidate in the Municipal Elections. Kilworth was a labourer and he was sent to prison in the aftermath of the strike for a speech in the Market Place in which he was alleged to have said:

> "I would say to the miners stick out, fight for your rights, and I hope that when the National Strike comes in about two years we shall have the good old red flag flying over Buckingham Palace. And when we have got our new town hall we shall have it flying over there with Councillor Billy Green as mayor . . . next Sunday I am taking a crowd outside the prison to sing the *Red Flag*".[28]

Instead of being outside the prison however, Kilworth found himself inside, and so did Lees after a speech, notes of which were taken by Inspector Castle. Castle alleged that Lees said:

> "I am a member of the local strike committee. One of our Trade Union leaders, there is no need to mention his name, says the Chief Constable wants law and order. Well, during the last two or three days he has shown how he wants law and order. He will have amongst you two or three plain clothes men and if there are groups of people some of whom are expressing their views, one or two are pointed out. Down comes the van full of coppers, you are struck with a lump of wood, thrown into the van and away to the police station. But you wait until our comrades have to take a more active part in holding up transport. It will give the Chief Constable the chance to come amongst you and show how pretty he is."

After remarks about the British Gazette and the bad position in London he is alleged to have continued, "there is a person named ******** who comes as a delegate to the Trades Council. Well he is on duty in the signal box at present; so there you are. Wait till he comes again I'll do my best to out him, I'll play ****."[29] Despite the fact that Lees had three witnesses willing to speak for him, he was convicted and sent down for three months.

The Betrayal

Of the local strike leadership, Lees stands out as being the only one who really understood the full potential of the situation, whilst at the same time grasping fully the many dangers inherent in it. In the end of course, local militants like Lees were betrayed by the class collaborationists who were taking the decisions at national level.

Behind the scenes the National leadership had been wavering from the very beginning, and on May 12 representatives of the General Council of the TUC went to Downing Street to tell the Prime Minister that they had decided to call the strike off. At 1 p.m. the news was broadcast by the BBC and as the day wore on, newspapers came out with enormous banner headlines. "GREAT STRIKE TERMINATED", "STRIKE OVER", "NO MORE VOLUNTEERS WANTED". Amongst the ruling class congratulations seemed to be the order of the day and as the striking workers struggled to comprehend the extent of the betrayal, members of the Establishment rushed to pat each other on the back.

In Nottingham the news was met with stunned dismay from the strikers. The local paper was able to resume printing with an editorial which went right to the heart of the recent events. "Unless a General Strike has a revolutionary aim it is bound to be futile." As the truth of this statement was being realised by the strikers, the different elements in the town's ruling group hurried to congratulate each other. The local press congratulated the Government on standing firm, and Sir Charles Starmer the

[25] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1926.
[26] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1926.
[27] Arther Statham: Tape Recording, Jan. 11, 1969.
[28] Nottingham Guardian, May 18, 1926.
[29] Evening Post, May 12, 1926.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

managing director of the *Journal* received a letter of thanks for his efforts during the strike from Asquith of the Westminster Press. The proprietor-editor of a blackleg news-sheet also received letters of appreciation from Sir John Turney and the Chamber of Commerce, and the Lord Mayor's appeal for thanksgiving contributions to the local police fund was soon answered with £500 from Boots, £250 from Shipstone's Brewery, and £105 from Raleigh.

Meanwhile the strikers remained shocked. Of the actual capitulation Jack Charlesworth remembers, "I heard it on the radio, it was a most pitiful story . . . where they went with their caps and took their cloth caps off, and this of course is how the commentator at the time reported it, they really apologised and wanted to get the country back on its feet . . . it was a shocking statement."[30] Cyril Goddard remembers utter "dismay and disbelief"[31] and George Hamilton has memories of, "real gloom cast over everything after the nine days."[32]

Victimisation

The town's capitalists were quick to push home their class advantage. In West Bridgford this meant that more than 50 per cent of the transport department workers employed by the council had their jobs filled by blackleg labour. Four members of the United Builders who had struck work at the Raleigh Cycle Company were not re-employed despite letters to Sir Harold Bowden from the Trades Council. Seventeen of the motormen employed by Shipstones Brewery were not allowed back. Only 80 per cent of the workers at Cammel Laird were re-engaged, and the City Transport Department attempted to get returning workers to sign a document promising that they would "not at any time withdraw service except after seven days written notice to the manager."[33] Notices posted by Blackburn and Sons, Stevens and Williamson, and the Standard Company stated that shortage of work would mean staff "alterations", and notices issued by Erriccsons stated that it would not be possible to restart all its workers at once.

Despite Baldwin's plea to let bygones be bygones a great deal of bitterness remained. At Bulwell shortly after the return to work a group of miners pulled up a convoy of coal carts, removed the pins holding the tail boards and pitched the coal into the road. At Bulwell a great deal of real distress remained. George Hamilton remembers:

> "We used the Baptist Chapel as a feeding centre . . . when we couldn't get any more foodstuffs we told the kiddies and their mothers to go to the school and demand school meals . . . the Education Committee sent a man to my house to warn me. He asked me what my authority was, and I told him starving kiddies".[34]

Enraged by treatment of this sort, Thomas Kilworth speaking in the Market Square about the imprisonment of Billy Lees said:

> "Whatever Lees said, he has not said half as much as Sir Albert Ball and his clique of forty thieves . . . next we will have not a General Strike, but a National Strike and then we will show the boss class what we will do . . . if there are any police here taking notes let me say this to you . . . don't be bribed by your capitalist bosses who are out to smash the Trade Unions".[35]

Sending him down for one month the magistrate claimed that he had been guilty of a gross breach of freedom of speech.

As things began to return to normal, people began to take stock. In purely material terms the NUR and ASLEF had paid out over £10,000 in strike pay to their members in the district. The miners' financial plight remained perilous. On May 19 it was reported that funds stood at only £4,000 with 23,000 eligible for strike pay, and the bank had had to be approached to advance £11,000 in return for the deeds of the union's property. The minutes of the NUDAW local branch report the imposition of a levy of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent of the wages of members in work to assist the distressed, whilst members of the United Operative Plumbers levied themselves 10/- a week.

In the weeks after the strike, the Trades Council continued to try to help the victimised. The signing of the new tramway agreement meant that many lost their record of service, or were dropped into a lower grade. The LNER suggested they would need less staff and those who worked during the strike would be given preference. Many of the miners too were victimised. Cyril Goddard remembers;

> "Any amount didn't get their jobs back . . . I remember an old miner who told me that after the strike the owner said to them, 'yes you've been on strike for so many months now I'm going to make you eat grass', and did make them eat bloody grass as well".[36]

George Hamilton remembers six or seven committee men from Bullwell pit being sacked after the strike and he himself was sacked in 1929, "they'd had

[30] Jack Charlesworth: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.
[31] Cyril Goddard: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.
[32] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1969.
[33] Nottingham Journal: May 14, 1926.
[34] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1969.
[35] Nottingham Journal, May 13, 1926.
[36] Cyril Goddard: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

their eyes on me for years. I could have told you the names of those who would go." [37]

Shortly after the strike had ended, the Trades Council decided to open a general organising campaign in a joint effort with the Labour Party. It was decided that this campaign would have as its objectives, to increase the membership of trade unions to 100 per cent, to protest against the Government's action in increasing working hours, and decreasing wages, and to urge the workers to organise politically as well as industrially. In the event this campaign seems to have been successful, and in November the Trades Council reported splendid victories for the Labour Party in the Municipal Elections. Labour had gained victories in five new seats in the town, and successfully retained three more. Bulwell too moved from Liberal to Labour after the strike, and had not the Liberal and Conservative organisations made common cause there is little doubt that Labour would have made more gains in the town.

Prior to the Labour Party's electoral victory the town's ruling group had allowed itself to relax into a welter of self-congratulation. After the strike the Chief Constable speaking to the town's Rotary Club thanked members for their help during what he described as a "very trying time". There was still a certain amount of trouble he explained but this was caused by a few misguided people. The trouble he claimed, was mainly the work of irresponsible youths and men coming from the "hooligan class". This view of the strike, and the people who took part in it, was probably shared by most of the town's industrialists and Establishment figures. That it amounts to a gross slander on the finest elements in the town's labour movement and to the thousands of ordinary workers who had taken part in the greatest social upheaval in the town since the days of the Chartists never seems to have occurred to either the Chief Constable or his friends in the Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club.

Looked at with hindsight, it is possible to see the General Strike in Nottingham as being in the very best of the town's working class traditions. Tragically the strike was a defeat for the workers of the town. The miners managed to stop out for some months, but in the end even they were forced to take Spencer's advice and go back on the best available terms. Let down by the national leadership the town's workers had no alternative but to return to work with the rest of the country. Jack Charlesworth sums up the whole experience well; "the workers were ready, there is no doubt that with proper leadership we would have gone over the top, the spirit was magnificent, magnificent." [38] Certainly the eagerness and enthusiasm with which the workers answered the call were in the same tradition with which the great struggles of the nineteenth century had been fought, and those who took part in the strike can take their place alongside those who in earlier times had won for the town the title of the "banner town of progress."

[37] George Hamilton: Tape Recording, Jan. 9, 1969.

[38] Jack Charlesworth: Tape Recording, Jan. 12, 1969.

Louis Althusser: Philosophy and Leninism

Grahame Lock

A large part of the debate in the philosophy section of last year's Communist University of London centred around the work of the French Communist philosopher Louis Althusser. *Marxism Today* has subsequently published a two-part article by John Lewis on the same subject in its January and February issues of this year. The theoretical debate which started in France some years ago had entered the British Party. Our comrades, like the British people as a whole, are sometimes a little wary of foreign imports. But if styles differ from one land to another, the principles of Marxism remain the guiding force of the Communist movement the world over, and in our day, as half a century ago, we have much to learn from our comrades abroad.

For those who missed the Lewis article, a very brief outline of the context. Louis Althusser is a philosophy teacher at the Ecole Normale Supérieure in the University of Paris. He is a member of the French Communist Party, which he joined in 1948. His best known published works are *For*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marx, *Reading Capital* and *Lenin and Philosophy*, all of which are now available in English translation[1].

Because Althusser is a professional philosopher, some of what he writes may be difficult at first for many comrades to understand. That does not mean that they have no right to enter the debate. It concerns all Communists. And if all of us have the duty to make an effort in the study of Marxism, the intellectuals have a duty too to write in such a way that their work becomes a tool in the hands of the Party, and does not remain the subject of sterile and academic discussion.

This point is linked to my first and general comment on some of the attacks which have been made against Althusser. It is not an adequate procedure to string together a few quotes from the many thousands of pages of Marx's work in order to "refute", just like that, the whole theoretical research of one of our comrades. This method, abstract and dogmatic, has little to do with that of Marx. What we need today are ideas capable of helping to solve contemporary political problems but which, at the same time, remain firmly based on Marxist science. And these cannot be produced without experiment.

Althusser and the Communist Movement

Why has Althusser's work caused such controversy, in France and elsewhere, and met with such hostile reaction (that of John Lewis being a rather mild example)? First, no doubt, because he has openly stated—and brought arguments to back his case—certain things which are often thought but left unsaid. In particular he claims that since the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956 (when Khrushchev spoke against Stalin) a new "interpretation" of Marxism has been developed by many Communist intellectuals —let us call it the "humanist interpretation"— which is incompatible with the principles of Marxism-Leninism which have guided the work of the Communist Parties of the world. Let us immediately make a number of things clear.

First, the reference to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Party does not imply that Althusser is simply nostalgic for the pre-1956 days. That Congress is an irreversible fact which only romantics would ignore.

Second, Althusser does not say that all Communist intellectuals have fallen into revisionism! Far from it. They have in general carried on the fight for Marxist ideas with great courage and tenacity. All the more reason to struggle against real dangers.

Third (and we shall return to this point), Althusser's attack on the "humanist" position does not imply that he thinks that Communists are not or ought not to be prompted by a concern for their fellow men. On the contrary. In his own words:

> "Communists struggle for the suppression of *classes* and for a communist society, where, one day, all men will be free and brothers. However, the whole classical Marxist tradition has refused to say that Marxism is a *Humanism*. Why? Because *practically*, i.e. in *the facts*, the word Humanism is exploited by an ideology which uses it to fight, i.e. to kill, another, true word, and one vital to the proletariat: the *class struggle*".[2]

These points have to be made, however simple they might seem, because of the use which has been made of Althusser's work by leftist currents in France and elsewhere. Let us be quite clear. What count are public statements and public positions. If Althusser's opinions were those of certain ultra-left groups he would not hold his Party card or work in the Party as he does.

On this point it is interesting to take note of a comment made by Waldeck Rochet, General Secretary of the French Communist Party, at a Central Committee meeting in 1966. After a brief discussion of Althusser's book *Reading Capital*, he points out:

> "If on the one hand it seems to me necessary to bring a critical appreciation to bear on the way in which comrade Althusser and other Communist philosophers treat certain crucial questions of Marxist-Leninist theory, that does not mean that we reject their work *en bloc* or that we condemn their research effort. On the contrary, our remarks are intended to help ensure that this effort is pursued on a more solid and fruitful basis".[3]

Althusser's response can be found in the interview-article *Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon*, in a section of the article which, unfortunately from this point of view, is not included in the English language version which appears in the collection *Lenin and Philosophy*. He explains that he and his collaborators do not pretend to have found all the answers:

> "All that we write is evidently marked by our inexperience and lack of knowledge—one can find inexactitudes and errors in it. Our texts and formulae

[1] *For Marx* is published by Allen Lane The Penguin Press, *Reading Capital* and *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* by New Left Books. The translations are by Ben Brewster.

[2] "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", in *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 24.

[3] Waldeck Rochet, *Le marxisme et les chemins de l'avenir*, p. 20.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> are provisional and have to be rectified. In philosophy things are very much as in politics: without criticism there can be no rectification. We ask for criticism of a Marxist-Leninist kind".[4]

He adds, referring to the Central Committee meeting at which Waldeck Rochet spoke:

> "We take the greatest possible account of criticism made by militants of the revolutionary class struggle. Certain criticisms for example addressed to us by certain militants during the session of the Central Committee at Argenteuil have been a great help. Others too. In philosophy one can do nothing outside of a proletarian class position. . . ."

True ideas and false ideas

The question of Althusser's inspiration is already answered. "My interest in philosophy", he says, "was aroused by materialism and its critical function for *scientific* knowledge. . . ." But "it was politics which decided everything. Not politics in general: Marxist-Leninist politics".[5] What is the function of Marxist philosophy? Just as in class struggle we need to "draw a dividing line" between our class friends and our class enemies, so we need to draw a dividing line between true ideas and false ideas. The same kind of line. For "in principle, true ideas always serve the people; false ideas always serve the enemies of the people".[6]

Let us consider the implications of certain "false ideas", of the use of certain terms, and in particular of those "new interpretations" of Marxism which, says Althusser, have even begun to slip into the Communist movement. Some of these ideas look harmless enough. But we must consider not the appearance, but the reality in use. There is no room here for a thorough survey. But we can look at an example. Let us see how the ex-Communist, Roger Garaudy—long a philosophical opponent of Althusser—makes use of certain notions for a well-defined purpose. The emphases are mine.

Against the blind mechanisms of *industrial civilisation*, Garaudy says, what emerges with force is the *human subjectivity* of the epoch of the *scientific and technical revolution*. Only socialism can offer an alternative. But what model of socialism will permit its fundamental aims to be realised in the new historical conditions created by this revolution? Not that model, he tells us, which translates "collective property" of the means of production by "state property"—and of a centralised state, disposing of the surplus-value of all social labour. On the contrary, socialist democracy can only exist when the working class itself has the power to dispose of this surplus-value. If this right remains the monopoly of a *centralised bureaucratic apparatus*, the working class in its mass remains in a situation of dependence and *alienation*.

The success of socialism, he argues, is not to be measured simply by the number of refrigerators or television sets, but by the *flowering of man*. Whatever that is, it is not apparently to be found, for example, in the Soviet Union. For there the central Party apparatus and its functionaries retain a bureaucratic, centralised and authoritarian conception of affairs, which remains the principal obstacle to the realisation of economic reform, political democratisation and cultural liberation. Luckily however a hope remains—Garaudy assures us that it is not impossible that one day, "the present Soviet rulers will be swept away, and that a new start will be made which will give back to the October revolution its real face and its radiant power".[7]

Garaudy, no doubt, is full of good intentions. No doubt too that there are real problems in the socialist world. What makes it possible to deal with these problems, however, is not good intentions but Marxism. The point is that Garaudy, precisely by playing on certain real problems with a theory which, at best, can be qualified as a sentimental pre-Marxist socialism, leaves the road open to anti-communism. What is the relation of this to Althusser's work? It is the following. Althusser's writing is precisely a call to vigilance "against the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois world outlook which always threatens Marxist theory, and which deeply impregnates it today".[8]

Garaudy has left the Communist movement. That does not mean that all non-Marxist ideas have departed with him. Which is normal, since Marxist answers to the problems of our time do not emerge, pure and ready-made, from the thought of Communists—they require constant struggle against the ever-present and often subtle effects of bourgeois ideology which surrounds us. Althusser has tried to make a contribution to that struggle, which is simply the class struggle in the domain of ideas. The philosophical fight over words is part of the political fight. That is why there is more to certain innocent-looking terms than meets the eye:

> "The bourgeois ideological notions of *industrial society*, *neo-capitalism*, *new working class*, *affluent*

[4] "La philosophie comme arme de la révolution", in *La Pensée*, April 1968, p. 34.

[5] "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", in *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 15.

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

[7] Roger Garaudy, *Le grand tournant du socialisme*, pp. 170-1. See also pp. 22, 46, 49, 134. 145, 191.

[8] "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", in *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 20.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

society, alienation and *tutti quanti* are anti-scientific and anti-Marxist: built to fight revolutionaries".[9]

Whatever the intentions of those who use them.

Marx's early works: what is their status?

Certain comrades will object that, as far as some of these terms are concerned—at least that of *alienation*—it is the use rather than the notion itself which is anti-Marxist. To resolve this question is beyond the scope of a single article. Let us at least however make the historical point that the use as tools of anti-communism of certain terms which appear in early texts of Marx is not new. The Social-Democrats Landshut and Mayer pioneered this practice in their 1931 edition of those texts. It is interesting to look at some of their theoretical arguments.

They remark that the hypotheses on which *Capital* is based are precisely those contained in his pre-1847 work.

> "For the author of *Capital* they by no means represent youthful errors from which he progressively liberated himself as his knowledge matured. . . . The principles of his economic analysis are directly derived from 'the true reality of man' ".[10]

As Althusser points out, the position is quite clearly stated. *Capital* is presented as a fundamentally *ethical* text, and though the ethical side is not explicit in the work itself it can be found in the early works, which thus supplement it.

It is this thesis, or something like it, which has recently re-appeared and gained popularity on the intellectual scene. It is what Althusser calls the "Young-Marx" revisionist current. We should note that when Althusser says that, in writing *Capital*, Marx effectively breaks with his early ideas and does not build on them, he is not suggesting that these ideas were anything but progressive at the time, theoretically and politically. The question simply is: why go back *now* and take them up again when we possess the scientific analysis contained in *Capital*? Why the eagerness to "rediscover" and propagate ideas with which, Marx himself writes, he already considered himself to have settled accounts in 1845?

The answer, in the end, can only be political. In the face of certain revelations and problems, and their personal effects, and unable to provide a scientific explanation and solution, some thinkers have abandoned the domain of Marxism-Leninism. But how much easier, consciously or unconsciously, when this abandonment does not have to be explicit! And so it is that they have turned to the early Marx—who after all is the same man as the author of *Capital*—for help. But the value of the most progressive ideas, when they do not stand on a scientific footing, depends heavily on time and place. They can so easily turn into their opposite. Isn't that, as we have seen, what has so often happened to these ideas taken from the early Marx? And isn't that what lies behind the unilateral adoption of "humanist" themes by anti-communist political currents from right to ultra-left?

What is anti-humanism?

Some readers may remain worried by the hostility to the term "humanism", as well as to the "ethical" interpretation of *Capital*, for which a "scientific" interpretation is to be substituted. Isn't Marxism the product of struggle and analysis, of reason and of passion? Precisely. But for Communists morality is not something abstract, but flows from class considerations. Marxism teaches us that the liberation of the people, of the working class and its allies, means the—albeit temporary—suppression, in one form or another, of the class of exploiters. That is the meaning of the Marxist concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Althusser's "anti-humanism" means nothing less and nothing more than the affirmation of the theoretical principles on which this concept, like the other concepts of Marxism, is based.

Very schematically, the point is that in his analysis of society Marx does not start from *man* the individual, but from *social* realities: classes, forces and relations of production, etc. So-called "human nature" (together with the moral ideas dominant at any given moment) is a product of these realities. Marxist science therefore cannot—as the "Young-Marxists" would like, as "theoretical humanism" asserts—take its departure from something called "the true reality of man". It is not at all some abstract "man" that makes history, nor any concrete individual, but the "masses"—"the classes allied in a single class struggle".[11]

The whole debate on the question of humanism has been marked by considerable confusion and misunderstanding, with regard both to the nature of the arguments involved and to their point. We have already seen very briefly why Althusser considers that, from the point of view of its theoretical status, Marxism is not a humanism. As to the point of the argument, he says:

> "The inflation of the themes of 'Marxist humanism' and their encroachment on Marxist theory should be interpreted as a possible historical symptom of a double inability and a double danger.

[9] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

[10] Quoted in Althusser, *For Marx*, p. 52.

[11] *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 67.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> An inability to think the specificity of Marxist theory, and, correlatively, a revisionist danger of confusing it with pre-Marxist ideological interpretations. An inability to resolve the real (basically *political* and *economic*) problems posed by the Twentieth Congress, and a danger of masking these problems with the false 'solution' of some merely *ideological* formulae".[12]

The question should now be a little clearer. But let us repeat: Althusser says that Marxism, as a science, is not a humanism. He does not say that the work of Communists is not prompted by human feelings. Indeed, only a political struggle based on Marxism will see these human strivings fulfilled.

Marxism and the Party

When Althusser talks about Marxism as a science, he means that it has broken with the rough-and-ready, spontaneous conceptions of the world which can so often lead, among other things, to political errors. These conceptions remain at the *ideological* level. Let us consider one famous example of the application of this distinction: it is Lenin's. In his article *What Is To Be Done?* he argues that socialist theory must be based on deep scientific knowledge. Scientific socialism could not have arisen directly from the struggles of the working class:

> "The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness. . . . By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement. . . ."[13]

This point is very important, the more so since Lenin is often misrepresented. Nothing that he says here—and nothing that Althusser says, who attempts to defend Lenin—in any way implies political *élitism*. The whole point, on the contrary, is that *scientific* ideas, to have any value, must penetrate the *working class*. For that task a new party is required, a party of a new type—a party of workers and other revolutionaries. A Communist Party.

Why is it a party *of a new type*? Because, for the first time in history, it makes politics based on scientific principles of theory and of organisation. What is the link between scientific theory and organisational structure? It is that if Marxism, as Lenin says, is indeed a system of ideas of a different kind from, say, trade union consciousness—which expresses the *spontaneous* reaction of the working class to its exploitation—then it follows that a Marxist party must be organised in a way that will allow the working class to lift its struggles above this spontaneous and disconnected level.

The party does not simply "express" the ideas, opinions and demands of the working class. It unites these with scientific principles of action. This is only possible when the party is one, united in its struggles. And that is why "the fusion of Marxist theory and the Workers' Movement is the most important event in the whole history of the class struggle, i.e. in practically the whole of human *history*. . . ."[14]

It ought to be possible now to understand something of the point of Althusser's work. He is concerned with the defence—at a theoretical level, for this is his job as a philosopher—of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, principles which, for the most part, are quite simple, but no less important for that—the more so since they are often denied. In defending Marxism against the distortions of the so-called "Young-Marxist" current and other revisionist interpretations, he is not simply engaged in an academic debate. For what is at stake here, in the last instance, is politics: the politics of the Communist movement.

Anti-Leninism and anti-communism

Anti-Leninism is not a new phenomenon. But it has found a new popularity in recent years. Certain ideological currents have flowered. Trotskyism and anarcho-syndicalism have found common cause in resurrecting once again the phantasm of Stalinism. Unilateral propaganda is made for "grass roots" socialism, for "workers' control", against "bureaucratism"—ignoring real problems of trade union and socialist democracy. However attractive these ideas may sound, their use, when not integrated into a properly Marxist perspective, has more often than not one end: anti-communism.

But the fight is not tit-for-tat. Our Party has a right to its existence. Its structure and principles are not arbitrary but founded on scientific analysis. "Marxism is all-powerful", said Lenin, "because it is true". To help show that it is true is Althusser's purpose.

There can in any case be no artificial distinction between theoretical and political work, and this was never more true. For the fact is that

[12] *For Marx*, p. 12.

[13] Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*, in *Selected Works* in 3 volumes, Moscow 1967, vol. 1, p. 122.

[14] "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", in *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 18.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

powerful ideological pressures are tending for the moment to push important numbers of young people into various kinds of leftism or political idealism. It is not easy to convince them of the Communist position. The bourgeois press, too, often plays a subtle role in this connection, together with television and the other mass media. Many other people, at the same time, become disillusioned with politics as they see it presented to them by these media, and refuse to take part in the struggle.

In this situation our Party finds itself in a difficult position, and things are similar in most of the advanced capitalist world. For ideologically we are to a certain extent swimming against the current. Isn't the Party "old-fashioned" and "conservative"? Don't we need a different kind of socialism from the one it presents as a model?

The point about Althusser's work is that it answers these questions. And it answers them unequivocally. Marxism-Leninism, let us repeat, is not a fashion to be picked up or left at will, but a science. Leninist organisation is not something out-dated, adapted to some long past historical period and now to be abandoned, but the only form of organisation based on Marxist principles. Only when Marxism guides the political struggles of the masses can the great problems of our time, including the real problems which exist in the socialist countries, be resolved.

It is, however, a question of proving it, and convincing others. And here real theoretical argument is indispensable. Althusser is one of those engaged in research whose aim is to give this theoretical argument, vital to the Communist movement, an ever deeper content. No wonder many ex-Communists and anti-Communists hate him! No wonder, for example, that the philosopher L. Kolakowski, late of the University of Warsaw and now apparently commuting between Britain and the USA, writes that Althusser's works give us "nothing but empty language"! No wonder that the Trotskyist review *International Socialism* congratulates Kolakowski for "effectively demolishing the pretensions of the Althusserians"![15]

Marx and Hegel

John Lewis has already commented in *Marxism Today* on certain specific points in Althusser's work. There is no room here to deal with all his arguments. But a few things need to be said, in particular on the question of Marx's relation to Hegel.

The point Althusser is making when he says that Marx breaks with Hegelian conceptions is that, given a *system* like Hegel's, one can't take bits and pieces and paste them together with other elements. More specifically, Marx abandons the idea of alienation, in its Hegelian or any other form. The position is *very roughly* the following.

Alienation implies separation. Such a separation exists, in Hegel's theory of society, between the essence of the social totality and its concrete determinations. In Marx's early work another idea of separation exists—that which divides the so-called essence of man from the concrete forms of his labour (commodities, state, religion). Both conceptions rest on the same formal idea of *essence*. Marx had to give up this idea when he founded the science of historical materialism.

First, historical explanation begins with the analysis of the social formation, and not with an abstract idea of the essential qualities of man. But nor can one base an understanding of society on any other notion of essence, as if there were some simple principle around which all events revolve. The economy, it is true, is the base. But its relation to the other elements of society—politics, ideology etc.—is very complex. If everything were directly determined by the economy (or any other single principle, as in Hegel) history would be much simpler than it is.

Not that there are no connections between Hegel and Marx. The fact that Marx broke decisively with Hegel does not mean—this is obvious—that the latter did not influence him. Marx "borrowed" from Hegel, if you like (from the chapter on the Absolute Idea in his *Logic*), the idea of a "process without a subject". Three points in this connection.

First, Marx gives the idea a different content. Though he agrees that history is not the history of any subject whatsoever, he explains it, unlike Hegel, in materialist terms of class struggle.

Second, it is because history has no subject that the Marxist tradition was correct in returning to the thesis of the *dialectics of nature*. This thesis has the polemic meaning that, *in this respect*, history is no different from the object of physical science.

Third, this idea of process, "Hegelian" on its formal side, is as a matter of fact what enables Marx to break with his earlier use of the conception of the human essence. The ironies of intellectual history!

It is worth pointing out that the immense scholarly effort made by some experts who assure us that certain terms used by the young Marx—that of alienation, for example—re-appear a given number of times in rather late works (including the *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*) is unfortunately rather wasted. From the fact that the same word re-appears, one can hardly conclude without further ado that the sense is the same.

[15] *International Socialism*, No. 50 (January-March 1972), p. 41.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But more important, no-one (Althusser included) ever suggested that the science of Marxism, or any other science for that matter, came into the world pure, free of the traces of other, pre-scientific ideas.

Science and class

Science, says Althusser, is always produced under difficult conditions, in struggle against old ideas. To use an image:

> "The sciences we are familiar with have been installed in a number of great 'continents'. Before Marx, two such continents had been opened up to scientific knowledge: the continent of Mathematics and the continent of Physics. The first by the Greeks (Thales), the second by Galileo. Marx opened up a third continent to scientific knowledge: the continent of History".[16]

The science founded by Marx is therefore a new science, and one particularly hard to establish. Why does the establishment of a science always represent such a struggle? Because ideas do not come singly, but always in a system, a whole system. A scientific revolution therefore has to break with the old system which it replaces. But that system *exists for a reason*. An ideology fulfils a function, is linked to the practical requirements of life, *or of some class or ruling group*. Think of the struggle of scientific physics against religion at the time of Galileo. It was not simply a case of truth versus error, but of science in combat against a set of ideas whose strength was based on their precise social and class role.

It is not hard to imagine the pressures which exist against the establishment of Marxism. But these pressures, when explicit, take different forms. Opposition or—distortion. Western intellectuals, Althusser writes, are, with a few exceptions, "still 'dabbling' in political economy, sociology, ethnology, 'anthropology', 'social psychology', etc., etc. . . , even today, *one hundred years after Capital*, just as some *Aristotelian* physicists were still 'dabbling' in physics, *fifty years after* Galileo".[17] When they mention Marx "it is always, with extremely rare exceptions, to attack him, to condemn him, to 'absorb' him, to exploit him or to *revise* him".

There are, in the universities and elsewhere, a certain number of academics with a certain idea of Marxism in their heads. Nine-tenths of these ideas, says Althusser, are false. But they have no trouble in winning a wide audience. This audience, however, is composed for the most part not of workers but of intellectuals since, "as Engels said, even when proletarians have not grasped the most abstract demonstrations in *Capital*, they do not allow themselves to be 'caught out' ".[18]

If scientific progress comes up against many obstacles—and the science of Marxism, for obvious reasons, has a particularly hard struggle—it has, as it were, certain resources at its disposal. One is the philosophy of materialism. The defence of materialism is the thread which runs through Althusser's work. We shall see how he interprets it.

The function of Marxist philosophy

Let us first make a clear distinction between historical materialism, which is the *science*, and *philosophical* or dialectical materialism. The history of philosophy is a struggle between two tendencies, materialism and idealism. But this struggle in philosophy only has a meaning when related to the struggle for the development of the sciences. A philosophy is defined by its relation to scientific practice. Does it aid that practice or hinder it? The answer to this question, schematically, determines whether a philosophy plays a materialist or an idealist role.

Materialism, at the same time, changes in form with every great scientific discovery (Engels' famous thesis). The struggle remains. That is why Lenin says:

> "The genius of Marx and Engels lies precisely in the fact that during a very long period, *nearly half a century*, they developed materialism, further advanced one fundamental trend in philosophy . . . mercilessly brushing aside as rubbish all nonsense, pretentious hotchpotch, the innumerable attempts to 'discover' a 'new' line in philosophy, to invent a 'new' trend and so forth".[19]

It is to Lenin that Althusser turns, in a work published in 1968, for an account of the function of Marxist philosophy.[20] It is Lenin who assigns to philosophy its own special domain. Philosophical categories are distinct from scientific concepts. But philosophy *intervenes* in the domain of science. It "draws a dividing line" between the scientific and the ideological. If it is a materialist philosophy it helps to repel ideological dangers. If it is idealist it sows confusion and hinders scientific advance.

The Marxist philosophy of materialism is able to go even further, for it can draw on historical materialism. And historical materialism tells us that

[16] "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", in *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 18.

[17] *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

[18] "Preface to *Capital*", in *Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 78.

[19] Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Moscow 1967, p. 325.

[20] The paper "Lenin and Philosophy" was originally read to the French Philosophy Society on February 24, 1968.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ideological obstacles have real social roots, including roots in the class struggle. For if in general true ideas serve the people and false ideas serve its enemies, it is the working class and its allies who stand to gain from the development of Marxism. When dialectical materialism intervenes in the theoretical domain *for* science, *against* ideological deformations, it therefore represents, in that domain, the class struggle.

This is the meaning of Lenin's thesis of *partisanship* in philosophy. A thesis which shocked the bourgeois world—for didn't it imply something disingenuous, a lack of intellectual honesty? The answer is not what the bourgeois world thought, but it is perhaps equally shocking. It is that all philosophy is partisan, whether it likes it or not. Only the materialist however stands, in the last instance, on the side of truth. And the Marxist materialist most firmly of all, for he knows what his partisanship comes to.

All this Althusser explains. No wonder that some of his opponents are reduced to slander. For his arguments do not remain on a barren, abstract level where they could be ignored, but have a function in accordance with the thesis of Marx, Lenin and Gramsci, "that philosophy is fundamentally political".[21] We have seen how Althusser interprets this thesis, something of the use to which his work is put. That is not to say that no room remains for argument! Other philosophers, other Communists, who disagree on many points, are engaged in the same work. We look forward to the debate. The last word here, however, to Althusser. It is one of modesty for his profession. Works of theory are necessary, he says. But in order to understand them, something quite specific is required:

> "One must directly experience oneself the two *realities* which determine them through and through: the reality of theoretical practice (science, philosophy) in its concrete life; the reality of the *practice of revolutionary class struggle* in its concrete life, in close contact with the masses. For if theory enables us to understand the laws of history, it is not intellectuals, nor even theoreticians, it is the *masses* who make history".[22]

[21] "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon", in Lenin and Philosophy, p. 15.
[22] *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

Georg Weerth—Friend of Marx and Engels

Uwe Zemke

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Georg Weerth whom his friend Friedrich Engels described as "the first and *most important* poet of the German proletariat". Because of this label, he was more or less completely ignored in Germany until Bruno Kaiser of the GDR published his Complete Works in 1956, exactly a hundred years after the poet's death. It is a remarkable and unique phenomenon in the history of German literature that one of the country's most interesting writers should have remained unknown for that length of time.

Admittedly, there were formidable difficulties in editing his work, much of which was either unpublished or not easily accessible, yet nothing was done in West Germany to remedy the situation, where 16 years after the publication of his Complete Works, Weerth has still not received the recognition he deserves. His name appears in hardly any of the standard histories of German literature, his work is not studied at universities or schools, and his home town has only recently begun to show interest in him when it became obvious that he could no longer be passed over. All this compares very unfavourably with the reception Weerth has had in the Socialist countries, and notably in the USSR, the GDR and in Cuba, where he has rightly been acknowledged as probably *the* foremost German Socialist poet.

Who then was Georg Weerth and why is he so important? His acquaintances included Robert Owen, the Chartist leaders, continental revolutionaries like Mazzini, Ledru-Rollin and Kossuth, German socialists like Karl Grün and Moses Hess, Wilhelm Weitling, the advocate of a Christian Communism, Ferdinand Lassalle, the founder of the General German Working Class Association in 1863, and progressive poets like Heinrich Heine, Ferdinand Freiligrath and Georg Herwegh. Above all, however, he knew all the leading members of the Communist

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

League, and belonged to the circle of Marx and Engels' closest friends before, during and after the revolution of 1848/49.

He was born in Detmold in the then Principality of Lippe (now part of North Rhine Westphalia in the Federal Republic of Germany) on February 17, 1822. He was the fourth of five children and came from an exceedingly religious family background, his father being the first clergyman in the Principality and his mother the daughter of a minister. During his school days he was reported to have championed the cause of the weaker and handicapped children. This is an early indication of his compassion for human suffering which was undoubtedly the result of his Christian upbringing. He left school at the age of 14 and took up a commercial apprenticeship in Elberfeld in the Rhineland, lasting from 1836 until 1839. There he first became interested in literature and joined a literary circle founded by Ferdinand Freiligrath, the celebrated poet who supported the revolution of 1848/49 and became a close friend of Marx and Engels.

From 1839 until 1843 Weerth worked first as book-keeper in Cologne and then as corresponding clerk in his uncle's firm in Bonn. During that period he began studying Hegel and also published his first lyric poetry, which dealt with romantic themes in the conventional Anacreontic manner. Although Karl Marx was editing the *Rheinische Zeitung* in Cologne when Weerth's first poems appeared in the *Kolnische Zeitung*, he did not meet him until 1845.

The Decisive Stage

The next stage in Weerth's life was the most decisive in shaping his future. Through the help of his uncle he obtained a position as clerk in a textile firm in Bradford, Yorkshire, and stayed there from 1843 until 1846. Soon after his arrival in England he met Engels who was working in his father's textile firm in Manchester. Between then and Engels' return to Germany in 1844 they visited each other frequently and formed a lasting friendship. Engels exerted beyond doubt the most important single influence on Weerth. He acted as his friend and tutor, passing on to him the information and experience he had gained during his stay in the manufacturing districts of England since 1842. Engels opened Weerth's eyes to the condition of the working class and explained to him the economic factors governing capitalist society. He introduced him to the works of Adam Smith, Malthus, Marcus, McCulloch and Ricardo, and to Feuerbach's philosophy of materialism which had made a tremendous impact in Germany.

Encouraged by Engels, Weerth began to take an active interest in his immediate surroundings in Bradford, which the Health of Towns Commission described as the "dirtiest and worst regulated town in the United Kingdom". In the 1840's Bradford embodied all the negative aspects of the new type of industrial town which had sprung up in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Through visits to hospitals, prisons, workhouses and slums in Bradford Weerth acquired a first-hand knowledge of the condition of the working class. As a result of what he saw he became an advocate of radical reforms and a passionate supporter of physical force Chartism, of which Bradford had always been a stronghold.

During his stay in Bradford Weerth came into contact with local Chartist leaders, like Henry Hodgson and George White, and also attended open air meetings organised by the Chartists at which the national leaders of the movement spoke on their tours of the country. At first he greatly admired Feargus O'Connor, the undisputed leader of Chartism in its heyday, but revised his opinion of him after O'Connor's betrayal of the Chartist cause in 1848. Weerth does not seem to have known him personally, which is not surprising in view of O'Connor's dislike of Continental revolutionaries and suspicion of foreigners in general. However, he was a close friend of two other popular Chartist leaders. They were George Julian Harney and Ernest Jones, the first English Marxists and the only two Chartist leaders who had links with Continental revolutionaries, and especially with Marx and Engels.

Unlike O'Connor they had realised that Chartism, though it arose from particular social conditions in England, was not an isolated movement, but part of a pattern of the struggle for emancipation by the working classes in Europe. Weerth's personal friendship with Harney explains why he is referred to as "our Chartist friend George Weerth" by the Chartist organ, *The Northern Star*, although he did not take part in the Chartist agitation or contribute to *The Northern Star* as Engels did.

Another one of Weerth's close friends in Bradford was John Jackson, a leading radical, from whom he learned about the early days of the radical movement and the rise of Chartism. He used much of the information given him by his Chartist friends and especially by John Jackson for his *Skizzen aus dem sozialen und politischen Leben der Briten* (Sketches about social and political life in Britain), a collection of essays written during his years in England, some of which appeared in German socialist journals in the 1840s. These sketches are of immense documentary value as a survey of English politics from 1815 until the great years of Chartism and supplement Engels' *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* (1845; The Condition of the Working Class in England), which was written at about the same time. Weerth and Engels knew

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

each other's work and probably exchanged ideas and information.

Weerth's Poems

Between 1843 and 1846 Weerth also wrote the bulk of his lyric poetry which was inspired by the social injustice he found in Bradford. Influenced by Feuerbach's philosophy, these poems dealt with the suffering and the exploitation of the working class. They reveal the extent of Weerth's social commitment to their struggle and illustrate how literature can become an effective political weapon. These poems established Weerth's popularity with Marx who saw their potential value to the Communist cause and therefore urged him to concentrate on his writing. Unfortunately, however, Weerth published only a small number of poems during his lifetime. According to Engels he differed from most other poets in that he could rarely be prevailed upon to publish his poetry and indeed he only did so during the period of his collaboration on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Weerth himself mentioned in one of his letters that he had burned a manuscript of poems in Bradford because he had not been satisfied with them.

In the summer of 1845 Weerth at last met Karl Marx in Brussels, where Marx was living together with Engels and a number of other German Communists. Marx made a strong and lasting impression on him, and Weerth decided at once to join him and Engels in Brussels at the earliest possible date. He was convinced that his place was alongside Marx and Engels, and left Bradford in 1846 to take up a position as travelling textile representative on the Continent. He departed from Bradford with mixed feelings. On the one hand he was grateful for having had an opportunity of studying the evils of industrial society during the two and a half years he had spent there, which he regarded as the schooling of his life. On the other hand his health had been affected by the climate and he had also become restless and melancholy for want of stimulating intellectual company, particularly after Engels had returned to the Continent in 1844.

While living in Brussels from 1846 until 1848 Weerth continued work on a novel, which he had begun in Bradford, about the relationship between the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the working classes. In it he attempted to show the effect of industrialisation on all classes of society, but must have realised at some stage that this was beyond his grasp and abandoned his plan, the novel remaining fragmentary. Despite its shortcomings the novel is historically significant because Eduard, the type of new militant working class leader, is the first class-conscious proletarian in German literature.

Weerth was also working on the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung* which Marx had transformed into the organ of the German Communists in Brussels. He contributed articles on his travels in Britain and both Socialist and more light-hearted poems. This mixture of social criticism and frivolity was a prelude to his later work on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

Emissary for Communist League

Having by now become an intimate associate of Marx and Engels, Weerth was one of the first to join the Communist League when it was founded in London in 1847. The nature and value of his work for the Communist League is evident from his letters to Marx and Engels, some of which read like confidential reports. Weerth had come to Brussels to represent a Bradford and Hamburg textile firm in Belgium, France and the Netherlands, which involved a large amount of travelling. As an employee of a highly respectable textile firm he was not in the least suspected of being connected with Communist activity and was therefore ideally suited to act as an emissary for the Communist League. He preferred working in this capacity to appearing at public meetings. On the whole he shunned publicity and remained in the background of the Communist movement. There was one notable exception, however, which marked an important date in the history of Marxism.

This was Weerth's speech at the Free Trade Congress in Brussels on September 18, 1847. It made the headlines in European newspapers and brought him wide international acclaim overnight. He had not originally intended to appear at the Congress at all, but when he discovered that there was no representative of the working class, he delivered a speech, hastily drafted during the previous night, in which he identified himself with their cause and attacked the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy for being oblivious to their condition. He argued that while he supported free trade in principle, he did not believe that it alone was sufficient to ameliorate the plight of the working class and therefore asked the assembly to think of more immediate and practical means of helping them. Weerth's speech is historically important because he was the first person who expounded some of Marx and Engels' theories in public and to a distinguished international audience of statesmen, politicians and economists.

When revolutions broke out on the Continent in February and March 1848 Weerth followed Marx and Engels to the Rhineland and was one of the founder members of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which appeared in Cologne from June 1, 1848 until August 19, 1849. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was the most revolutionary, militant and uncompromising of the many democratic newspapers which had mushroomed in Germany in 1848.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Marx became editor-in-chief of the newspaper, and Engels his deputy, while Weerth took over the magazine section.

Weerth's first publications were his *Humoristische Skizzen aus dem deutschen Handelsleben* (Humorous sketches about German commercial life), which appeared in serialised form. Unlike his fragmentary novel they were based entirely on personal experience of work in his uncle's firm, and reveal Weerth's great humour, his gift of observation and his skill at portraying people with whom he had come into contact. He had worked on these sketches in Bradford and Brussels and now brought them up to date by setting the scene in the Rhineland at the time of the 1848 revolution. There is much serious social and political criticism in this work, as Weerth unmasked the shameful alliance which the aristocracy had entered into with the bourgeoisie in 1848 to consolidate its own position and to crush the working classes.

He used the same method of attacking his class enemies in his best work, *Leben und Taten des berühmten Ritters Schnapphahnski* (The life and adventures of the famous knight Schnapphahnski), which he wrote in 1848 and 1849. This dealt with the corrupt life of an aristocrat who had become a member of the German National Assembly in Frankfurt a.M. Weerth saw Count Lichnowski, the prototype for this work, as the typical representative of Prussian aristocracy, and aimed at exposing this decadent class of society through the example of one of its most notorious members.

Schnapphahnski was his only work which appeared in book form during his lifetime. Apart from these two works Weerth also wrote a number of poems, some short prose sketches and occasional political articles for the newspaper. The outstanding feature of his journalism is the utter contempt with which he treated his enemies, whether they were the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie or the government. He worked in close liaison with the other editors, adding his irony and sarcasm in the magazine section to whatever they had singled out for an attack in the political section of the newspaper.

Weerth was largely responsible for creating this type of political sketch which became a powerful weapon in the newspaper's fight against its enemies. In a tribute to him Engels wrote in 1883 that he doubted whether any newspaper had ever had a more witty and frivolous magazine section than the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

Marx's Paper Banned

The authorities were soon alarmed at the radicalism of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, whose policy it was to support every revolutionary movement in Europe, to work towards a united and democratic German republic and to bring about the downfall of Russia, Prussia and Austria. During the disturbances in Cologne in September and October 1848 the newspaper was temporarily banned, but after its reappearance it became even more militant. When it lent its full support to the insurrection in the Rhineland in the spring of 1849, the Prussian Government at last felt secure enough to rid itself of the newspaper by expelling its editors. The last number on May 19, 1849 appeared completely in red print and contained a farewell message from the editors in which they pledged their continuous support for the emancipation of the working classes.

Following his expulsion from the Rhineland Weerth intended to resume his commercial career which he had neglected somewhat during his work on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. However, a month after his expulsion from the Rhineland he received the same treatment at the hands of the Belgian authorities, who regarded him as an undesirable alien because of his Communist associations and his work on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. This coincided with the beginning of the period of political persecutions throughout Europe which forced many revolutionaries to go into exile to England or America. Weerth was at this time also engaged in a law-suit which the Prussian Government had brought against him for libel against Count Lichnowski in his *Schnapphahnski*. The legal proceedings lasted from September 1848 until October 1849, when he was sentenced to three months imprisonment.

He received news of the sentence in London where he had gone after his expulsion from Belgium. Marx and Engels, who had emigrated to England in 1849, advised him strongly against giving himself up, as the Prussians could not possibly force him to leave England. However, Weerth decided to serve his sentence, and in so doing was considering his future which involved a large amount of travelling on the Continent. He therefore returned to Cologne and served his sentence from February until May 1850.

After his release from prison he was utterly disillusioned about further political activity and concentrated on his commercial work. Nevertheless he remained in constant touch with Marx and Engels and supported their stand against other Continental exiles in London, like Mazzini, Ledru-Rollin and Kinkel, who were setting up provisional governments to take over the new European republics. This difference in policy between Marx and Engels on the one side and the majority of Communists in London on the other led to the split in the Communist League in September 1850 and to Marx and Engels withdrawing from the German Working Men's Association. Weerth and a handful of other Communists, amongst them the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, sided completely with Marx and Engels, who had come to the conclusion that due to increasing prosperity and good harvests the period of revolutions on the Continent was irrevocably over. They rejected the revolutionary mania, which had gripped almost all the Continental exiles in London, as ill-considered and foolish, and turned instead to theoretical work, analysing the factors which had led to the European revolutions of 1848/49, developing a system of political economy, educating the working class about its historical role and preparing it for future class struggles.

Unchanged Political Allegiance

Of all German poets who had supported the revolution of 1848/49 Weerth was the only one who did not compromise himself afterwards. He did not change his political allegiance, nor did he revoke his revolutionary writing, but remained silent, as he saw no possibility for further literary work under the oppressive conditions in Prussia after 1849. While Marx and Engels respected his attitude they tried to persuade him to contribute to their journals, like the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, *Politisch-ökonmische Revue* or to those of their friends, like Weydemeyer's *Revolution*. Harvey also asked Weerth to collaborate on his *Democratic Review*. Weerth was, however, too dejected about the past to be drawn into political agitation again and refused. Here is a classic example of the paralysing and shattering effect which the abortive revolution of 1848/49 had had on the writing and life of someone like Weerth who had thrown himself enthusiastically into the cause of democracy and had seen all his efforts wasted.

Weerth's business took him to Portugal and Spain in 1850 and 1851, and to the greater part of Germany in 1852. His work now frequently necessitated his return to England when he was again able to help Marx and Engels. On a number of occasions he lent money to Marx, who was experiencing the greatest financial hardship of his life between 1850 and 1852. Besides being on social terms with him and Engels, Weerth also worked again as emissary for them and the Communist League in 1851 and 1852. This was the time of relentless Communist persecutions and arrests in Germany, culminating in the Communist trials in Cologne in October and November 1852. It was mainly through Weerth that Haupt was unmasked as traitor, after he had disclosed the names of the members of the Communist League's central committee to the Prussian Government, and that Bangya was exposed as a spy for the Prussian Government, after he had won Marx's confidence and extracted an important manuscript from him. Weerth's work as emissary ceased when Marx and Engels disbanded the Communist League in November 1852 after the imprisonment of many of its leading members on the Continent.

In December 1852 Weerth went on an extensive business tour of North, Central and South America, from which he returned in June 1855. During his stay in Europe in 1855 he again visited Marx, Engels and other political friends in England, although he had by now lost contact with political developments in Europe. An unhappy love affair prompted him to return to the tropics in November 1855, sooner than he had expected. From then on he made Havana his business headquarters and travelled to the Caribbean islands and to South America. On a trip to Haiti he contracted yellow fever, became severely ill on his return to Havana and died there about a week later on July 30, 1856, at the early age of 34.

Weerth's life was short but eventful, and it is perhaps not without symbolic significance that he should have died in Cuba, later to become the first Socialist country on the American continent. For a long time after 1856 Marx and Engels continued to mention Weerth in their letters and spoke of his death as an irretrievable loss to them and to their party. They lost in him the only poet who had really identified himself with the working classes and who had put his considerable literary talent at the disposal of the Communist cause.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Discussion Contribution on:

Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

Frank Jackson

May I, as one who helped in the birth of our Party and took active part in the General Strike of 1926 and the great Unemployed Movement 1929 to 1936, have a word on Bert Pearce's "The Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain" in the January 1971 issue of MTD. I think Bert has struck a bullseye with what he says, though it savours a little of tautology. The question of strategy is of paramount importance to the working class movement today. In these days of an upsurge of the masses, rightly pointed out by Bert, I would suggest we should look back on the past and ask ourselves why, during the years from 1926 to 1936, in which literally millions of workers took part in protest demonstrations, and, through the Hunger Marchers, took to the small towns and villages, a message of hope opening up a new vista to them—why in this great turmoil, all that could be marked up as gains were some partial reforms? True they defeated the Government aim of saddling the whole of the crisis of capitalism on to the backs of the workers, but they made no real dent in the fabric of capitalism by leaving a new revolutionary thought and spirit behind—as witness the fact that the Communist Party gathered no big numbers to its ranks. True again that the workers defeated Moseley and Nazism in Britain as a result of this great upsurge, only to allow 25 years after the halter of Heath and Toryism to be placed round our necks.

This is why the question posed by Comrade Pearce is so timely: it is of paramount importance, and I think the answer lies much on our own shoulders. We give too much attention to the gains of immediate reforms and too little to the objectives of the ending of capitalism and the gaining of a socialist Britain.

Take a look at the slogans of the years I have mentioned: "End the Means Test" "Work or Full Maintenance" "Raise Unemployment Pay" "Restore the 10 per cent Benefit". Never once "End Capitalism, We Want Socialism"—and never did we raise the issue of how to end this misery or how Socialism could cure it. This is why *The British Road to Socialism* is of such importance NOW: as Bert Pearce points out on page 7 under "An overall Strategy: "The fact that the theoretical basis of the programme was often only superficially treated in many Districts". I go futher and say it's not only many Districts, it was a national blunder. Let me emphasise I am not saying the slogans used were incorrect—they were correct, but they never attempted to get away from the immediate issues. They never gave an objective to aim at—Socialism.

Look at the Party's mouthpiece the *Morning Star*. How often do we find our socialist objective raised—only by occasional articles such as those of J. Klugmann. Every day we are exhorted to "Oust the Tories": "End the Bill"—both correct, of course, but failing to clinch the issue by showing one how socialism could win out. Although the Party's programme gives the answer it fails to put forward our objective, in fact there is far too much of "Oxbridge" and far too little proletarianism in its columns.

I applaud the idea of Pearce when he says:

> "It is in the battle to take the ideas of *The British Road to Socialism* to all those most active, and deep thinking in the course of the present struggle that we can open their minds to the way forward." (page 8, 'Role of the CP').

I am sure that if we can outline the objective of socialism in plain English for *all* to see then we shall begin to build up Party membership, create a real Left-Wing that will sweep away the dregs of Right-Wingers like Wilson and his cohorts now acting as a strangle-hold on a forward movement here, to get a socialist Britain. We shall get away from the days of untold sacrifice of the *few* in our ranks, when enthusiasm dies and Party membership falls, and in its place build up an ever increasing enthusiastic membership imbued with the searchlight of socialism gleaming in every eye—heading the struggle on a realisable programme towards socialist change.

I cannot do better than to conclude by borrowing from Bert Pearce his concluding remarks when he says:—"This is what *The British Road to Socialism* provides. There are no revolutionary short cuts. . . . But that it is needed *now* (my emphasis FJ) amongst all those coming into political life and industrial action". (Page 18).

We surely need a real live socialist crusading spirit to sweep first right through our Party then on to the broad masses waiting so eagerly for a vision to see ahead.

Published by the Communist Party, 16 King Street, London, WC2 8HY and printed by Farleigh Press Ltd. (T.U.), Watford, Herts.—24560

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more publications from the USSR

SECRETS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

G. Deborin

The author, a prominent Soviet historian, gives a popular account of the major events in the Second World War. He shows that the guilt for preparing the war lies with world imperialism. The real meaning of certain developments is exposed, and many of the "secrets" attending the inception of the war are revealed. Speaking of the mortal danger to mankind posed by fascism Deborin stresses the prominence of the role played by the USSR in routing the enemy and analyses the sources of the Soviet people's victory over nazi Germany.

277 pp cloth **£1**

THE SOVIET FORM OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT

Editor: V. M. Chkikvadze

The book is a summing up of the more than fifty years' experience of the Soviets as organs of a new, genuinely democratic power. Shows how the Soviets originated and developed, on what principles their work is organised, how the elections are conducted, and what the relations are between the deputies and their electors. The competence, organisation and principal functions of the Supreme Soviets--the highest bodies of state power-- are examined in detail.

254 pp cloth **75p**

OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The authors, a team of Soviet historians led by A. I. Sobolev, analyse the principle aspects of the Comintern's activities, using many new documentary materials which have never been published before.

563 pp cloth **£1.50**

FOLLOWING LENIN'S COURSE

L. I. Brezhnev

Speeches and articles from November 1967 to the Speech at the Sixth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party, December 1971.

500 pp cloth **80p**

Available from:

CENTRAL BOOKS LTD.,

37 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8PS

Please add 15 per cent for postage

WORLD MARXIST REVIEW: 1972

No. 5

THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

TO OVERCOME THE CRISIS OF THE PALESTINE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

N. Ashhab

ROOTS OF THE DOLLAR CRISIS

Price 13p plus postage

£1.50 for one year

from

CENTRAL BOOKS LIMITED

37 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8PS

IRISH DEMOCRAT BOOK CENTRE

SPECIALISTS IN IRISH LITERATURE

Civil Rights Pamphlets

Politics - Economics - Sociology

Songs - Music - Poetry

Badges - Maps - Posters

A SELECTION FROM OUR SOCIALIST LIBRARY

Marx and Engels on Ireland: H/B £1.50

Lenin on Ireland: 10p

T. A. Jackson: Ireland Her Own. £1.00

Desmond Greaves:
Life and Times of James Connolly. £1.00

James Connolly:
Labour in Irish History. 25p
The Re-Conquest of Ireland. 13p

Visit or send 6p stamp for Catalogue, to

THE DEMOCRAT BOOK CENTRE

283 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Publications

JACK WODDIS

NEW THEORIES of REVOLUTION

A full scale critical examination of the theories of three influential "ideologists of revolution"—Franz Fanon, Regis Debray, and Herbert Marcuse.

£4.50

New Edition

FREDERICK ENGELS

'ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY'

introduction by Eleanor Burke Leacock

This new edition of Engels' famous work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* has an introduction by a Professor of Anthropology estimating the value of his conclusions in relation to present day knowledge.

paperback £1.50

LAWRENCE & WISHART

Collet's

LONDON BOOKSHOP

AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
Prepared by Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.
£1.50 plus 21p p&p.

KARL MARX
by Werner Blumenberg
An illustrated biography.
Paper, 85p plus 13½p p&p.
Hard cover, £2.50 plus 21p p&p.

MY GENERATION
by Will Paynter
Paper, £1.50 plus 13½p p&p.
Hard cover, £3 plus 21p p&p.

BLOOD IN MY EYE
by George Jackson
A continuation of "Soledad Brother".
£1.95 plus 16p p&p.

THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY, PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE STATE
by Frederick Engels
A new edition.
£1.50 plus 11p p&p.

WARS AND POPULATION
by B. Urlanis
£1.25 plus 16p p&p.

ELEANOR MARX
by Yvonne Kapp
Vol. 1. Family Life. 1855-1883.
£4.50 plus 21p p&p.

INSIDE VIEW
by Richard Crossman
Three lectures on Prime Ministerial Government.
£1.95 plus 10p p&p.

FOR OUR SECOND-HAND DEPARTMENT
We are always interested in buying the Marxist classics, books on Left politics, working-class history, Black studies, Women's liberation.

64-66 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0BD

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED